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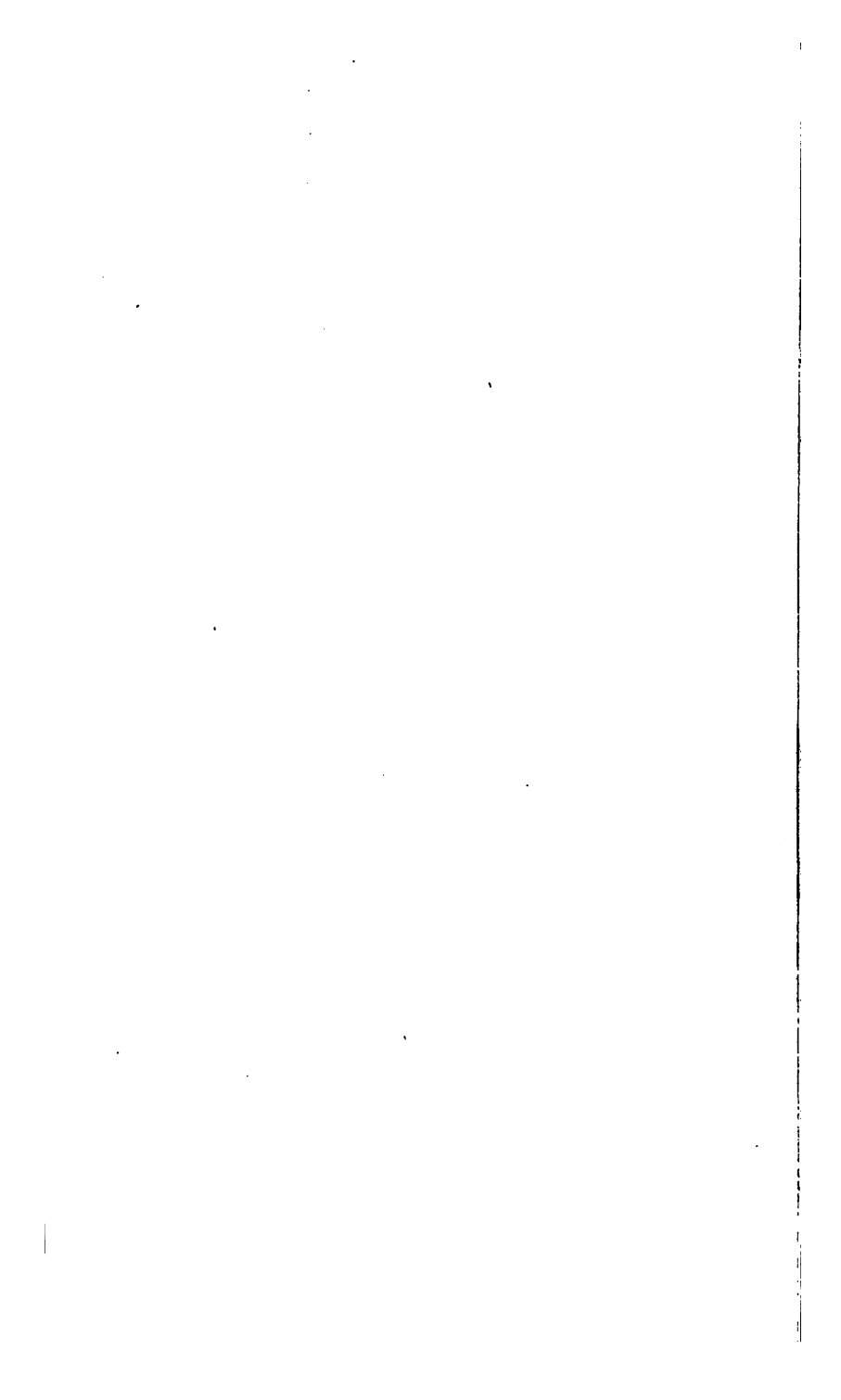
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THE PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

BY

W. Neale

THE AUTHOR OF

“CAVENDISH,” “WILL WATCH,” &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

“I write a careless kind of good-humoured Shandean book which will do your hearts good—and your heads too,—provided you understand it.” STERNE.

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA, & BLANCHARD.

1836.

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DEDICATION.

TO

CHARLES FREDERICK WILLIAMS, ESQ., K.C.,

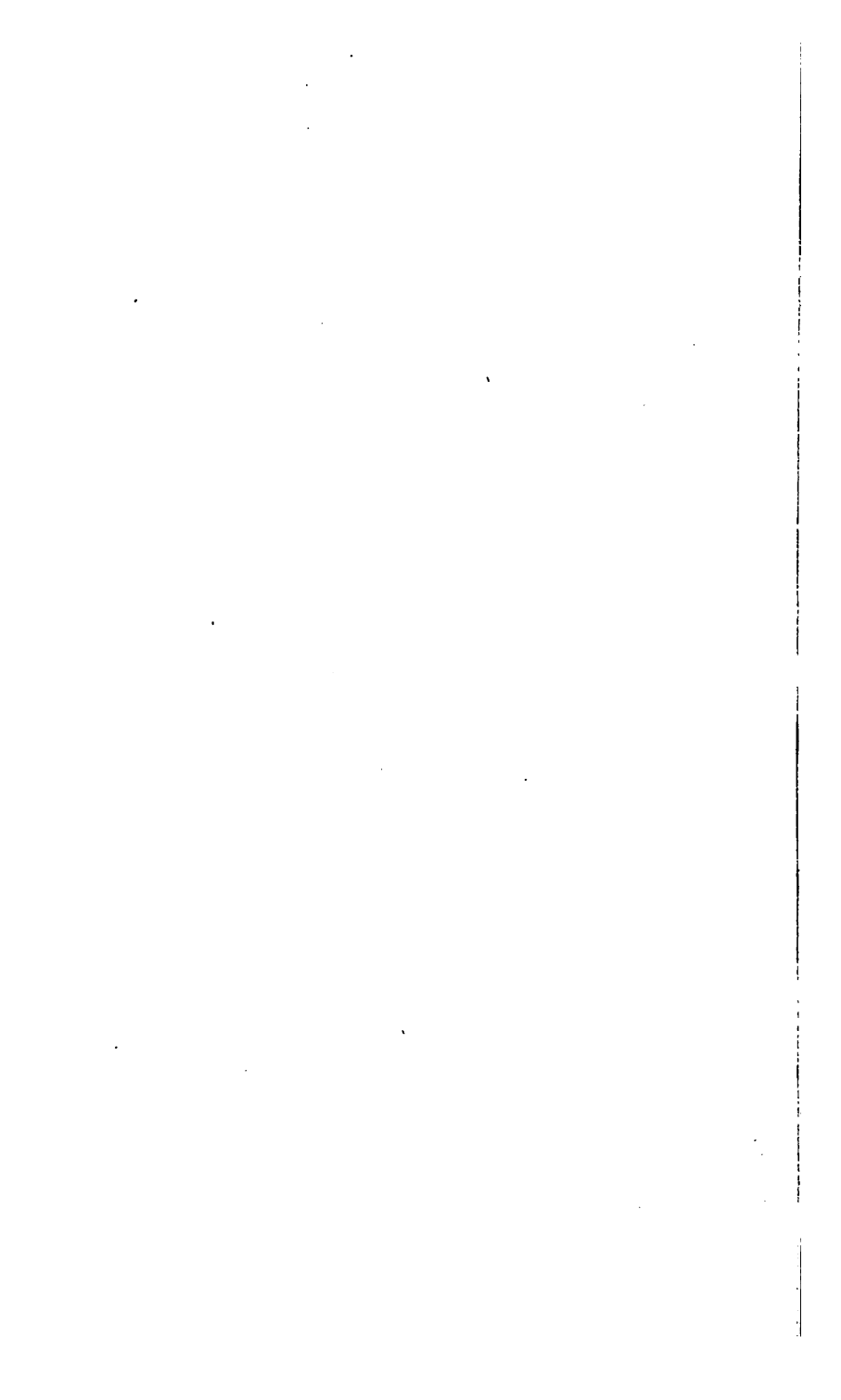
SENIOR COMMISSIONER OF HIS MAJESTY'S COURT OF BANKRUPTCY,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

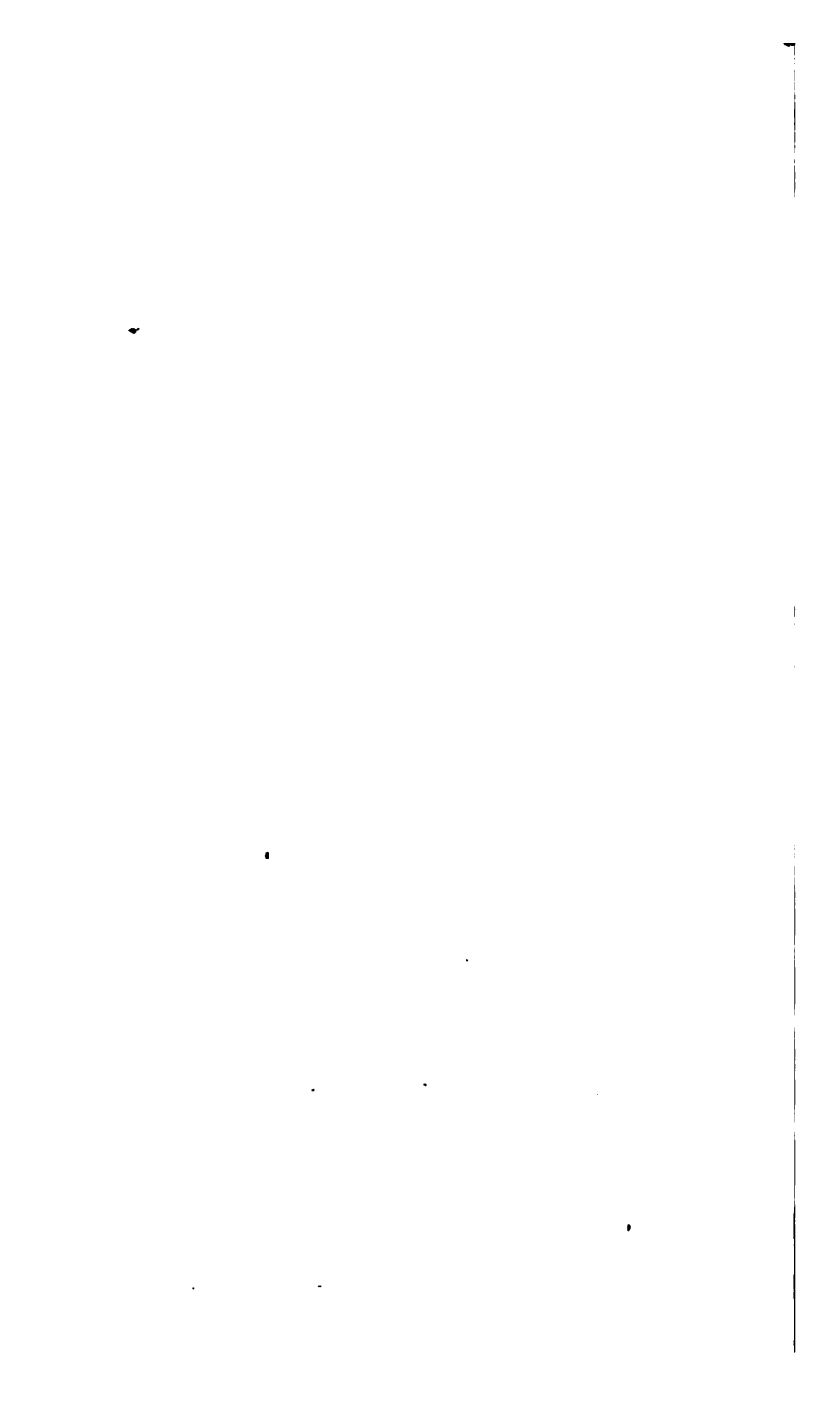
MY DEAR SIR,

BELIEVE me it is not among the least of the many kindnesses you have shown me, that you now allow these trifling pages to be graced with your name. In days like the present, when by far the greater portion of the reading public, prefer works of prose fiction, to those of other styles, an author is in some degree forced to strive for the honours of a novelist, whether he wills it or not. Such being the case, the scope of a writer's ambition must be, to blend as much as possible, the useful with the amusing. That such has been my aim—however imperfectly achieved—as well in this work as in every thing else that I have ever written,* I believe an impartial judge will admit.

In the following pages, you will perceive that an attempt has been made to delineate a melancholy spectacle with which we too frequently meet in the experience of life. That, of men of a noble genius, and the most extraordinary acquirements, who, from a perverseness of disposition and a want of the most common prudence, render their lives miserable to themselves and useless to others. Having witnessed the daily dying of more than one mind so formed, I may, perhaps, have been over-impressed with the sad moral I have conceived it to convey. Otherwise what can be more touching, more interesting to the observer of nature, than the wanton self-destruction of energies and capacity, that under happier auspices would have benefited mankind? Like a beautiful piece of mechanism, that from the error of some trivial balance,

* Perhaps it may not be impertinent here to correct a report, which relates to a third party. It has been asserted, that the greater part of the works under the authorship of Cavendish, were written by a near and reverend relative. As his profession has not sufficed to shield him from this charge, it may be as well to remark, that to a single line, they are wholly and solely the effusions of one individual—Simon Pure, Esq., whose name is hereunto attached.





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knows where to find him—that's the person who should bear one's oddities; if not, there may be less difficulty in attaching them to one's mother. If the unfortunate be an orphan, then his uncle or his aunt should enjoy the blame—particularly if the latter is a single woman and has no connexions, or what is quite as good, but very little money. Failing these, he must have the magnanimity to fling them on his nurse or his guardians. Wanting which, he must claim to be one of the children of the air, "a chartered libertine." Not that he is to be "kissing all he meets,"—I advise him before he sets out—that course is rather dangerous.

Most men charge their foibles upon their constitution, but unfortunately my physician told me last week, that I had no constitution at all. Well, one cannot risk one's constitution and enjoy it too! I attended as chief mourner at the burial of mine some years ago. He died of a decline, brought upon him like many of his brethren, by late hours, dicing, and bad company. It was only a brief time before his demise, he spent two hours in the society of a maiden aunt, armed (good woman) with a smelling bottle and a poodle dog. Poor fellow! I said at the time, he could never recover it!

No—as I was going to remark, with great candour, I am ready to confess myself not as other men are. But I consider that I have ever been a cruelly used, and persecuted man. No wonder I am queer! My mother was a poetess, and I was brought up by hand!

Now my mother, (you of course know my mother) Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—happy woman! I was her only son—she spells her name, Montagu—I was accustomed till her death to spell mine, Mountagu—to show one must suppose the relationship between us. And here I might be excused from saying any thing farther respecting that lady; and for fuller particulars refer you to her Life, and also to her Letters; than which, indeed, I can scarcely conceive that any can be better—unless, perhaps, my own. But of this you will be better able to judge hereafter. As I am on the point of mentioning my mother, of course I feel myself bound to praise her; an act of great magnanimity on my part, seeing she cut me off with a guinea. Perhaps you would like to know the reason why, and I should be most happy to inform you, but from all I can learn, that was the very thing she never knew herself. Doubtless she was a good woman! I may say, she was a most respectable woman! It is true that she was mali-

ciously charged with being a blue-stocking. But what of that? As she was accustomed most learnedly to remark, there was a great deal—of difference, I presume—between her stocking and her nose; and provided the blueness did not extend to the latter, and that in their calumny, people did not go to extremes, she for her part was content. She had been early taught to consider the freedom of the press, as one of the greatest blessings of men—“ah! and of women too! Why not?” said Lady Mary. I smiled.

But the brightest of luminaries have their specks, and she too had her macula. With regard to her bringing me up by hand—true, it entailed upon me some little ailments, from which I might otherwise have been free, but when we reflect on the great end for which the safer course was abandoned, we cannot imagine that a lady, the rival wit of Mr. Pope and the eminent literati of her day, should have adopted any other plan. How could it have been proper for any poetess, at the same time, to nurse a squalling brat outside her bosom, and a fine sapphic ode within? Or simultaneously to stir up—pap and pentameters?

To what a pretty pass shall we be brought, when ladies can be found to abandon fame and distinction, for the endearments of their husbands and their children! or leave the high attainments of science for the low domestic offices of affection. Such sentiments are only fit for your ordinary class of good people—a *caste* whom every man of taste and *vertu* feels it his duty to abhor.

Well, having at length succeeded in rearing her only son by the united aid of lyrics and panada, what must she do but have me inoculated with the small pox. Who but a poetess, I should like to know, would ever have found out such a mode of amusing herself? This experiment was tried at Constantinople, and perpetrated on my defenceless person for the purpose of bringing the practice into fashion in England. It might be all very fine for the nation; but I don't thank her ladyship for first hazarding this rash innovation upon me. For years I never passed the portals of Montagu House without eyeing the frizzled granite pillars, and thanking my stars that my face had been saved from bearing them a close and fatal resemblance.

As for my father, his was a character truly absurd! He could find nothing better to do with his time than improving his mind. He spent the best part of his days amongst his books, and when I last heard from home, was actually bent on leaving a huge collection of MSS. to the

British Museum. As the nation therefore is likely to benefit by his labours, I am well aware that they can have no curiosity to hear any thing farther about him; and so, as in duty bound, shall on this head remain silent.

Between them, they contrived, not very long after their marriage, to disagree on every point save one—that they should differ upon all. This they did to admiration; and having chosen to separate without communicating their reason to the world, the latter determined—as in duty bound—to sift the matter to the bottom. One party assigned one motive and a second insisted on another. At last this important point was settled upon high authority. Some very good people, who wished every one to do as they did, kindly informed mankind, that the Grand Seigneur, among other ambassadorial gifts of office, had favoured my father by presenting him with me. A statement—as Lady Mary observed—most perfectly correct—with this amendment, that I happened to be born before my mother ever saw Constantinople.

With regard to the cause of separation, I really think I may say, that the discovery of this matter has been reserved for me. I may be accused of exaggeration, but, on my honour, I do really believe—after a most laborious investigation, that my parents resolved to live apart, because—they could no longer live together.

The foregoing outline, short, though exceedingly perfect as it is, will doubtless have displayed to you the utter unfitness of two such people to undertake the charge of a young gentleman of my parts: I therefore relieved them of the heavy responsibility, but in a manner which was, I must confess, like every thing else, relating to me, rather queer.

I was born in the year 1713, at Warncliffe Lodge, in Yorkshire; and in addition to the surname of my family, was christened after my father, Edward Wortley. Three years after my happy parents were blessed by the birth of such an offspring, my worthy progenitor was appointed Ambassador to the sublime Porte, and taking out, to assist him in his negotiations, my mother and myself, it was then and there that I was so atrociously submitted to the inoculating lancet of a native physician. Had he been a natural instead of a native, I should have been less surprised. Having by some accident recovered from this barbarous operation, my mother had the supreme satisfaction of bringing me safe home, in the year 1718, and, going to reside at Twickenham, her intimacy commenced with Mr. Pope.

Though a very great poet, he was a crabbed little man, and never forgave me for once squirting dirty water into his shoes. For what does a man make a lady's acquaintance—particularly if he is a great person, or a great writer,—if it be not quietly to put up with all the innocent recreations of her charming progeny? Their persons should be our playthings, and their foibles our perquisites, the more marked, the more easily mimicked, and so much the more valuable. Most willingly would I at any time have foregone a sugar plum for a good two-handed pull at the long powdered queue of an old friend of my father.

However, Master Pope severely punished me for my frolic; for out of pure revenge, he advised my mother to permit my father to send his only son to Westminster School. It was in vain that I assured my friends that I disliked school upon principle. They told me it would improve upon practice, and off I went. Instead of experiencing the truth of this consoling assertion, I soon found I had been much too correctly brought up to forego my notions very readily; and, therefore, in the third week, sent home, to say that I had been perfectly right in my convictions, and that unless my parents recalled me, I should run away.

Finding that to my "principles" I now so rigidly adhered, my relations came and implored me to change them. I told them they must wait till I was a Tory out of place. On this my father gave me a box on the ear, and got into his carriage.

"Don't cry, my dear," said my mother, and she went off to hers. When first I saw them drive away, I had a very good mind to run out and jump up behind; but seeing the men-servants there, with their sticks, I had a much better mind to do nothing of the sort. Putting into my pocket the purse full of money which Lady Mary had with great sagacity bestowed on me at parting, I turned round and walked into the play-ground, venting by the way on Mr. Pope many more kind wishes than ever he bestowed on Martha Blount.

I am in a very peculiar situation, thought I, as I walked along, crying with all the emphasis of a broken-winded horse. However, I'll stick to my principles. I said I'd run away—and so I will. In my case it will only be doing what is right. I'll go off, and ask how to set about it from Fenwick and Manners—they're the only two boys in the school who have shown me any thing like

kindness—to be sure, one's blind, and the other foolish—so I suppose that's the reason.

I see of what the world is made—good nature in a lad's disposition is ruin for ever; I'll get rid of mine on the first opportunity!

"Why, Montague," said Fenwick, on seeing me, "my dear Montague, what is the matter?"

"Nothing, Fenwick, only I want to run away!"

"Well, I declare, Montague, if I haven't been thinking of it myself for the last two months! We'll go together, Montague!—but don't *you* cry;"—and the tears began to trickle over his own cheeks as he spoke the words.

No wonder, thought I, that they call you a fool!—and as soon as I saw that *he* was beginning to pipe, I left off myself, for I could conceive no fun in being troubled to cry on my own score, while I had a friend so ready at doing it for me.

"I am glad, Fenwick, to hear you've been so long thinking of running away," I replied, "for, as you must have a very good plan already hatched, it will save us the time of sitting on one, you know. What is it? I propose that we talk it over at once, and put off the rest of our lamentation till to-morrow. I know, by experience, it will keep very good 'till then!"

But when a man or a boy either, or still more a woman, has set out upon a good cry, it is not easy to get the fond pursuit relinquished, and as Fenwick didn't set to at it, like me, upon "principle," it was a long time before I could bring him up. He had a touch of nostalgia upon him, and as his thoughts still strayed towards home, a sob every now and then broke from him, like the rumbling of a bucket in a draw-well. Amongst the most beautiful points in my writing you will find my similes. But the affair grows so serious it really demands of me a new chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Supplies farther particulars of my associates, and narrates our first grand start.

By degrees I succeeded so far in composing the gentle-hearted Fenwick, that I obtained from him the digest of his two months' consideration. The whole plan seemed to me of such mature growth, such infinite sagacity, and great observation, that I at once determined to adopt it.

The father of Charles Robert Fenwick was one of that favoured, well-paid race, the country curates. Some kind star had apportioned to him a scolding wife, a large family, a small income, and a mathematical head. Four particular blessings, that invariably lead a man into the most happy state of insignificance. Had he not been so fortunate in the possession of a scolding wife, he might have been happy in his family. Had he possessed no family, he might have missed the scolding of his wife. Had he inherited a larger fortune, there is every chance that he would have turned his attention to something more profitable than mathematics; while, on the other hand, had he been only too stupid for mathematics, he would doubtless have stumbled on a more wealthy lot.

But like the Patriarch and his wife, no doubt he considered his a very salt lot; and after bearing up for some time against annual births and diurnal scoldings, he resigned the distinctive habiliment of his sex into the hands of his lady, and gave her up as one, in whom nothing short of a new poor law could ever work an efficient reformation!

This, as she long maintained, was the only proof of his good sense she had ever observed since the day of their marriage. She told him long enough ago "he had nothing whatever to do with the children, except—to provide for them."

Poor man! he meekly bowed his head, and seeing the reasonable nature of her dictum, wrote off the whole state of the case to his eldest brother, concluding his letter with the diffident request that he would be pleased to receive his (the curate's) eldest son, now eleven years of age; and quite fit, therefore, to be lodged and boarded,

clothed, educated, and provided for,—at the expense of his uncle.

The uncle was a rich old fellow, who lived out at Clapham. Being the eldest son, and having, therefore, received all the wealth of the family, he very naturally and very prudently abstained from spending any of it on his nephews or nieces; but with much praiseworthy philosophy, contented himself with laying out twice the amount of his income in birds, beasts, and reptiles, and very often fishes; which he piously intended, under the name of the Fenwick Museum, to leave by his will to the College of Surgeons. Always except and provided, that his greedy and unjust creditors should not seize it in the mean time, for their sole use and benefit.

Mr. Fenwick, senior, having received the letter of his brother, and seeing that he was in great anguish and distress, made proportionate haste in sending his reply; which he managed to do after the lapse of a month. In this letter, the only point on which the curate was blamed by his kind brother, was, for having asked so little. As for the request, that was for the present granted: because it was the only thing the curate would ever obtain. The lad, therefore, might come up to town, but was at the same time to be cautioned that the first act of indiscretion would be the instant cause of his being trundled down again.

With regard to the delay, as he was a person of fine gentleman-like feelings, he said that this had only been caused by a terrible fit of "yawning." His correspondent, knowing his character, thought that this must be the result of a terrible fit of lying instead. But this he kept to himself. Thoughts will approach the truth involuntarily; but it is not at all times proper to express them.

Fenwick's fate was now decided. His father read his uncle's letter, and his mother added to it a fine commentary. "Now Charles, my boy," said she, "you see what sort of a man your uncle is—and you must mind your p's and q's accordingly. I don't expect—although you are going up to Clapham—that you're to become quite an angel, or that any son of mine is to have no spirit;—so mind now, if you do get into any scrapes, don't let them come to your uncle's ears, that's all!—For if you come back here to bother me and your poor brothers and sisters, you know what to expect! Come now! pack your box! you shall go off early to-morrow morning, and I hope we

sha'n't see you for the next two years—that's a dear boy!"

Accordingly, the dear boy packed up and was packed off; and however the parting lecture might conduce to his fair prospects, we cannot but confess it admirably calculated to produce that ingenuous candour of disposition, which is the chief charm of youth.

His uncle received him with all the affectionate warmth, that might have been anticipated from his letter, and at the earliest moment sent him off to school—though not before he had contracted a violent passion for natural history and deceit—two admirably blended qualities; the former resulting from admiration of his uncle's museum, the latter from submission to his moroseness.

As Fenwick's disposition was of that blessed species so expressly denominated "*sappy*," it will readily be supposed, that among his school-fellows his life was not exactly what might be termed perfect happiness. Change suggested itself to his philosophic mind; he thought of home—but there unhappily he remembered his mother! He thought of Clapham—but there still worse he recalled his uncle. The rest of the world was to him a *terra incognita*. Fancy led, and hope beguiled him—the good-for nothing jades! And because felicity and birch rods were incompatible in his present location, he fondly imagined that he had only to set out upon his travels, to find pleasure and delight in every path.

In this profound conclusion, I could not but encourage still more than I admired him, for there certainly is a depth of reasoning in all juvenile cogitations, astonishingly instructive to the mere common sense worldlings of maturer age.

Where should he go? Several inviting spots presented themselves consecutively to his contemplation, and though all of these held out greater or less allurements, they were most of them more than sufficiently remote, and too difficult of access. The chief thing that ultimately decided his choice was the splendid plumage of a silver pheasant, in his uncle's collection, and as a nice, near, and convenient place, and one which, as he said, he could reach without the plague of crossing the sea, he finally chose North America, the chief charm of which, he assured me with great glee, was the fact of its being an uninhabited island.

On hearing the name of our future home, of course I could not but fully agree in its perfect eligibility; much

commending my associate's choice of a clime, with the history, produce, and localities of which we were so perfectly acquainted. I confessed that, for my own part, I had long entertained a secret regard for some part of central Africa; but this I generously waived, when Fenwick informed me, that zoology derived nothing from its wilds, but the tiger—a gentle race of animals, for which he modestly acknowledged that we were hardly a match.

We determined at once to set off, and began that day to consider what necessities we should lay in for the journey. Those ultimately chosen, formed the most consistent stock—to wit—a copy of Robinson Crusoe and a Dutch cheese.

When Fenwick and myself were thus amply prepared, we finally determined on strengthening our league by the addition of Manners, whom I have before mentioned. He was a compeer every way fitted for the undertaking—his chief recommendation being that he was so weak we could persuade him, if necessary, that black was white; so small in person that either of us could at any time be amused by thrashing him at pleasure; and so blind, that lead him where we would, he never could distinguish the difference of one place from another.

In order to preserve a perfect friendship between three such allies, it was before starting agreed, that on arriving at our destination, I was to be the monarch of the island, and my confederates the princes—that we were to have for our subjects whatever natives we might be able to catch; that Fenwick, moreover, was to shoot and stuff those birds of gorgeous plume, the sale of which were ultimately to realize a large fortune. Manners, our junior, was to cook and act the ostler, while I, as the head of the party, was exempt from every thing but the enjoyment of my state, and left free to ride about at pleasure on my horse. As it was not quite clear from whence my steed was to come, or whether it was to be a zebra or a unicorn, it was deemed prudent, not to be more specific. The day for our starting came. To our former stock we had added both gold and silver. The amount of the former was half a guinea—the wreck of what my mother had lately given me; whilst the most valuable article of the latter description was the aforesaid silver pheasant of Mr. Fenwick, senior, which his nephew had taken leave permanently to adopt—the better, as he said, to compare its feathers with those of any birds we might bring down on our way, and thus ascertain when we had arrived in the promised land.

To this store of valuables, Manners contributed an old double-flageolet, which, as none of us could play a note on it, was very properly considered a truly valuable acquisition.

Having chosen a holiday for our emancipation jubilee, we managed with infinite address, to escape to the water-side, crossed over to Lambeth, and thence directing our steps towards the classic regions of Blackheath, set off—the better to disguise our fugitive intents—at an easy run of some seven miles an hour. The only disagreeable part of this pace, was the difficulty of sustaining it; and as we soon began to be what the vulgar people call “*blown*,” the labouring inspiration of our lungs caused many passengers to turn round and look at us, long after we had passed by them.

For my part, the Dutch cheese having been intrusted to my care, I very wisely put it into my hat as a most proper and agreeable mode of conveyance; but finding somehow or other, it had a tendency to hurt my head, I removed it to a more prominent but less lofty situation, under my arm: taking due care never to let it drop above once in forty yards. Fenwick had got stuffed into his bosom, the silver pheasant, and as the tail and stiffened legs of the bird, kindly worked their way out, they greatly added to his appearance; to say nothing of a certain graceful motion of his arms and legs, from which, like many other people, he seemed actuated by the very laudable ambition of walking on two sides of the road at once.

As for Manners, he at all times went about with a large green shade over his eyes, but now for the purpose of additional sharpness and shadow, he raised his left arm above his forehead. In his right, he proudly grasped his double-flageolet, and resolutely exerted all the energies of mind and body, in running against every person of every denomination; including many who were in his way, and still more who were not.

CHAPTER III.

A chapter well worthy of my readers' cool consideration, as it sets forth my principles on beginning the world; my reasons for deviating from the beaten track; and more than all, a proposition interesting to mankind at large, the truth or futility of which, my future life was to demonstrate.

WITH various fortune, we at length arrived on the summit of Blackheath, at about two hours after noon.

The day was as lovely as it was possible to conceive. A fine strong breeze was blowing from the southward and eastward, and freshened in our faces, after the toilsome, forced march which we had undergone, with all the reviving sweetness that the breath of heaven can bestow.

Prideaux
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Proudly we sprang onwards, exulting in our new-born freedom, each one of us in his heart imagining himself a hero, alike careless of the future and ignorant of the dangers that it might disclose. Having speedily gained the middle of the heath, I called a halt, and accordingly we all seated ourselves upon a rising knoll, that commanded the surrounding prospect, when, each of our adventurous band drawing forth his pocket knife, we commenced a united attack upon the cheese; greatly seconded in our laudable labours by a beautiful little spring that babbled at our feet, and a loaf of nice new bread which we had purchased on the road. "Gentlemen," said I, as soon as we were each supplied—"I have called a halt, not for the mere purpose, necessary as it may seem, of eating and drinking, but of declaring to you my views in thus letting ourselves loose upon the world. Most belligerent states before they declare war, are accustomed to publish some manifesto. I prefer to act first, and give my reasons afterwards. It has always been impressed upon me, from the days of my nursery governess to the present time, that the happiness of life must ever be mixed with a much greater proportion of sorrow. Now, my friends, the necessity of this case, I have always most sedulously denied. I have always maintained that these 'inevitable sorrows' of life, are owing to the bad management of individuals—the artificial state of society, and other causes;—that life, properly lived, may be a state of

unmixed enjoyment; and with this proposition, I have taken the liberty of emancipating that which shall be nameless, from the birches of Westminster school, and now intend to commence life entirely after my own fashion; and as a proof of the correctness of the opinions I have recited, I do assure you, as tipsy aldermen say at lord mayors' dinners, 'the present is the happiest moment of my life.' " Having expressed these sentiments, though in language more natural to my—then ripe years, I ceased amid the cheers of my associates; and, with hearts full of hope, we finished our repast. After a long colloquy on our future prospects, we arose, and with increased spirits, commenced our journey.

Mighty and many were the jokes with which we seasoned our advance—nor was it till the road began to tire, that our converse could be said to flag. We had proceeded about two miles, when Manners, who could support his fatigue no longer, commenced uttering loud complaints. To this, I replied by expressing my extreme sorrow at his weariness, as well as repugnance towards the duty it imposed on me, since, unless he took heart to proceed, I should be obliged to take leave to thresh him, according to the most approved custom of fagging and bullying at Westminster school. This produced rebellion, and after another hundred yards, he flung himself down on the bank, and set up his howl, for Heraclitus himself was not a more crying philosopher. Such an inopportune, though favourite amusement, I desired him immediately to relinquish, or if he was determined on having recourse to his pipes, I suggested that now was the proper time for him to learn his first lesson on the flute. But when people are at the one antipodes of passion, they cannot bear that you should see-saw on the other, and so little was he pleased with my acting the Democritus, that greatly resenting my words, he drew out his knife, and asked me which I thought would cut the deepest. This was an awkward, and certainly would have proved an irascible question, but for two reasons—first, that I am one of the best natured creatures in the universe; and second, at this very instant, up came a sort of van, or wagon, on which we read in large letters, "DARTFORD AND ROCHESTER." Starting from his recumbent position, the jaded explorer ran into the middle of the way, and having succeeded in stopping the vehicle demanded what was the fair to the next town. He was speedily answered, that he need give himself no concern

in obtaining such information, since the van was entirely full, and not a place to be had for love nor money. Poor Manners now recommenced his "*pillaku*," with redoubled furor, and the van having proceeded onward, was just about to renew its original trot, when we heard a harsh but good-humoured voice within, exclaiming "Vast heaving! vast heaving, a-head there! I'll see your neck as long as my arm, before I pass by a water-logged craft, without so much as sending a boat aboard to offer her assistance."

On this, a parley ensued between the driver and the voice of neck-stretching propensities, which ended in a round jolly sailor's phiz being popped out from the inside,—the better to give us an invitation to enter; for that he, the said speaker would "find room to stow us somewhere under hatches; even though he should have to get out and take to the pad himself." The generosity of such an offer, I could not but feel, as well as accept, and this, as the last of the three who mounted, I attempted to express, but the sailor only replied by a hearty slap, not exactly on the back, and a gruff "Come, bundle in, you young shaver, and bring your bones to an anchor."

As soon as the change of light enabled me to look round, and set down to each person their several dicta, I found the passengers to consist of an attorney, an itinerant preacher, a fine fat old sergeant, and several women, besides the sailor and ourselves. "All right, coachee, make sail." A dead silence having succeeded the bustle of our entrée, I endeavoured to bring on a little conversation with our new and warm-hearted acquaintance, by diffidently inquiring what was the news in the port from which he had come.

To this he veraciously replied, by assuring me that Queen Bess was dead, and her nose was cold. I thanked him for his information, and said, in that case she was luckier than all her neighbours, for some of my acquaintance had scarcely any nose at all; looking at the same moment, with a smile, at his own, a very fair moiety of which had been sliced away; as evident from a gash that extended to either cheek.

"That shot, youngster, was not badly fired," replied Jack, laughing; "and as for my nose, I lost the best part of that some time ago, in capturing a French prize, laden with specie; but they're so plaguy-long in paying their dues, that I only got the rhino a few days since. 'Tis n't so pleasant as if it had not happened, that's true

enough, although to be sure Johnny Crapeau gave me a good price for it, and for the matter of that, I'd be well content to lose the other half for as much more, but always in a fair stand up fight, d'ye mind me."

"So I suppose, sir," said I.

"Pray, sir," said the attorney, "if it would not be impertinent, what, might I ask was the sum you actually got for half a nose's purchase? for I have several most respectable clients, who are very anxious to raise money upon personal security."

"Got," said Jack very roughly, as he saw that the other was quizzing him, "got twice as much as half to be sure, you lubber, and that's as much again as ever you'll be worth. But whatever I got, I soon managed to walk through it; and if you want any thing from me, my boy, I tell you what you'll get, monkey's allowance—more kicks than coppers. However, as I was saying, youngster," turning to me, "I wanted to see my poor old father and mother here at Greenwich; but having been away better than four year, I found them both dead and buried."

"With *their* noses cold, I suppose, too?"

"Ay, ay, cold enough, poor creatures! Thof I was mighty glad to find the grass was growing nigh a foot long over them, for I went to see that they were all snug and comfortable before I set too at my own spree; and then the fun began."

"Well, I'm sure, sir, that was very kind of you," again interrupted the lawyer, "but why, may I ask, were you so glad to see the grass had grown high above them?"

"Ugh! ye shark, why, that they might always know which way the wind blew to be sure."

"Profane wretch!" mumbled the preacher.

"Ay, truly, sir, I had forgotten that would be of great use to them," said the attorney.

"There you're right, boy, for then d'ye see they might always know what sort of weather their son Bill was making of it at sea. For I must say this, the old folks always had a thought to give to him, however hard up, as ye may say, they might be themselves."

"Rather hard as you remark, sir," ejaculated the sergeant, "and this duty being done, you found no difficulty in amusing yourself."

"I should think not, seeing I'd nothing to do but to spend the dirt as fast as I could, and get back again to my ship, at Chatham."

"And how did you manage the matter?" said I.

"Why, I just put a fresh quid in my mouth, and steered straight for the Jolly Sailor to be sure, seeing it was kept by an old chum of mine. The next thing I did was to get aboard a due allowance of grog, order supper, and more grog—ready by two o'clock in the morning,—and then as soon as I had managed to get hold o' some half a dozen sweethearts, just to make a fellow look a little respectable-like, we set off to London in two coaches and four to the theeater. Play over—back we came to supper, discharged cargo, and left orders not to be roused before five o'clock next morning. Then, on with my toggery, and out I stepped. The first six women-folks I met, I booked them to spend the day with a poor fellow, to make up for the six I'd parted with the night before. Then, after them, the first twenty hands I come across, I shipped on the same voyage, taking care first to pay each of them their day's wages, so that they shouldn't be losing time as it might be; and that over, d'ye see, I ordered them a couple of glasses of shrub and brandy, just by way of a whet for breakfast; so what with the landlord and his lady, and a rare good fiddler, we managed to make two round dozen. Breakfast time come, we set too again, with a flitch of bacon, two or three cold hams, broiled fish, mutton chops, beef steaks, and brandy, with one or two other light little matters, such as hot rolls, toast, bread and butter, tea, coffee, and eggs. That bit of business over, we sided out for a bend, and what with singing, dancing, fiddling, and drinking, we managed to pass away the time pretty comfortably. Then, dinner, you know, I took care should be a regular good English spread, roast and boiled beef and mutton, turkeys, geese, and chicken, and lots of porter and wine, brought up and broached by the dozen, with other little matters again, till we soon got a few good cloths in the wind. Then there was taking to coaching it, and off to the play again. Bless your heart, I got through the matter as easy as possible, and no bad way, boy, either—for ne'er a man or woman of 'em but would 'a been glad to have come back again next day."

"And did you not allow them?"

"Allow them! I should think not! Where would 'a been the fun of seeing the same old face two days running. No, no; I took care to have a fresh party every day, and a clear score. Why, the whole three hundred lasted just six days, and that's what I call a cheap and comfortable

fashion of seeing a little of the world and good society, as ye may call it."

"Say rather a wasteful expenditure of good money, which, with proper care, might have been turned to a useful account," interrupted the methodist parson from a corner of the van.

"Vast heaving, brother, not so fast either," said Jack, rather indignantly, to the preacher, pricking up his ears at this reflection; "I know how to care for it properly when the time comes, and I'm a little pushed or so: but what a precious fool I'd be to care for what I don't want."

At this very moment we heard an exclamation of surprise and terror from the driver, and the van, which was going slowly up Shooter's hill, at once came to a dead halt. In this pleasant pause, we distinctly heard a strange voice, in altercation with our Jehu, who replied to some menacing demand, that he hath nothing to bestow, but that if the applicant went behind, and asked the gentlemen inside, he might possibly get the little he desired. This conversation set most of the party a screaming; Manners began his usual howl, and, in another instant, the coarse curtains of our vehicle were roughly pushed aside, and a tall, threatening figure presented itself, with large whiskers and a blackened face. Drawing a horse pistol from his bosom, this intruder thrust the muzzle close to the face of Jack, who was sitting nearest to him, saying, "Come, make haste—you know what I want."

As this, in the calm gloaming of a summer's twilight, was any thing but a pleasant sight, my limbs at once took to a most perplexing shake; but so far from the complaint extending to the honest Tar, he never even unbent his arms from across his breast, but grinning with all the composure in the world, replied, "Know what you want? how the plague should I know what you want?"

"Your money!"

"My money?" slowly and contemptuously repeated Jack, "you sha'n't have it!"

"Then I'll blow your brains out," replied the robber.

"Pooh," exclaimed Jack, as cool as ever, with a long note of laughter, then squirting his tobacco juice into the highwayman's face, he added, "blow away, you lubber, and be hanged to you!—I'd as soon be without brains as without money!—Heave a-head there, coachee!"

Crack went the whip—off started the horses, and before the footpad recovered from the surprise of such a re-

ception, we had got considerably the start of him. Turning round on his heel, he jumped behind the hedge from which he had sprung, and there I suppose remained to lie in wait for some softer prey.

The applause bestowed on Jack was now unanimous. The attorney told him, that although he did not know of any act of Parliament which authorized the rewarding of brave sailors, who squirted their tobacco juice in the faces of base highwaymen, still he certainly thought there ought to be one. The preacher itinerant too made known his intention, of praying for him at the next stage; while the women, one and all, declared him their preserver, at which I thought he seemed infinitely better pleased. Indeed, he testified this, and rewarded them by pulling a bottle of brandy from his pocket, and making every one of them drink a portion—greatly to their dislike—poor souls! If the brandy made them cough at all, he added to it a hearty slap on their backs, assuring them that it was infinitely better for them than their mother's milk, as they'd soon find out—provided they would only drink enough of it. He now told several funny stories and adventures, and within two miles of Dartford, much to our regret, made the driver set him down at the cottage of an old ship-mate, with whom on the ensuing morning he was to go on to Chatham.

"That man," said the preacher, as Jack went out of hearing, "that man is a living instance of how much money a sailor will spend."

"Ay," added the old sergeant, "and of how little he'll fight for."

CHAPTER IV.

Treats of some interruption of my plan of individual liberty and perfect happiness, and also of my successful appeal to the aid of the children of darkness.

WITHOUT almost any farther conversation, we soon arrived at the old town of Dartford, celebrated in English history, for having been the spot at which the insurrection of Wat Tyler first took rise, and once also a favourite

town with Edward the Third;—this monarch having founded a large nunnery without its walls, by way of offering to the church, and at the same time given a splendid tournament within, to make it even with the Devil. However, the van discharging its contents, we were dropped upon the world at large to make the best of it, and having paid our fare, we held a consultation as to the course to be pursued. Sleeping at the inn we thought would be too dear, and sleeping in the streets too cold. Having by the light of the tap-room window, in vain consulted the pages of that erudite gentleman, Robinson Crusoe, Manners remembered that a bird stuffer, much employed by his uncle, lived in this very town. Thither then we went for a bed, but our intended host being from home, his worthy partner gave us an humble, but a hearty meal. After eating very sufficiently, repletion and fatigue so far overcame me, that I sank beneath the table in a sound sleep. I was soon awakened. Our host having come in, now heard our tale—no light or laughing matter!—and then kindly took us out, and hired one bedroom for the three. We needed no pressing to our repose, and having paid the price of our chamber, which was a shilling, were in five minutes fast asleep. It is never a very difficult matter to awake in a strange bed, and on the ensuing morning, I opened my eyes to find Fenwick very busy shaking me by the shoulders, and at the same time in the act of listening to the striking of a clock below. My first impulse was to count the sounds, of which I heard five. The natural historian, however, told me he had counted three before, which made eight; and in great consternation at this loss of time, up he jumped. Having emptied half the contents of the water jug upon poor Manners, just to remind him of his juniority, we commenced our ablutions, which we duly performed to the tune of his usual pipe, and having lost little time in dressing, we hurried out, to recommence our journey, before the heat of the day should come on. We had not, however, proceeded twenty yards when I heard a cry of surprise from our younger comrade in the rear. Turning round, I beheld him in the gripe of another, who, pulling him up to Fenwick, took the latter into custody also. Seeing in an instant, that this was a party affair, I started to my heels, but the enemy giving cry, some benighted tailor, returning from a night's debauch, laid hold upon my collar, and in a few minutes we

were all securely locked within one of the best rooms of the Red George. Manners was in tears already—the placid Fenwick was disturbed,—and myself in such a rage, that I hardly knew whether to take the poker or the tongs.

What could this portend? All was soon explained. The door opened, and in stalked an individual in his shirt. It was one of the under-ushers; he had been sent in pursuit; had succeeded, though we knew not how, in tracing us to Dartford; and having, as it is technically termed, earthed his prey, set on his beagles to watch their starting from cover. Well assured that we were sleeping in the town, he followed our example, and left our apprehension to his underlings. Informed by them of their success, he now came, like a true dog of his breed, to gloat upon our misery. Having boxed each of our ears, to make no distinction, and locked the door again, to make no mistake, he returned to his bed, leaving us to enjoy the pleasures of our situation. Alas! Fate had conspired against us! Had we got up, as we intended, at six, we might have mingled with the townspeople in the street, and so unknowing our danger, have escaped it. But two clocks striking together, we had arisen at a moment when not a soul was to be seen abroad save ourselves, and behold the result! My companions having sufficiently bewailed their misfortune, fell fast asleep. I went to the window, and finding its height too great to make a leap over pleasant, seated myself to watch the rising of the sun. I felt also that my anger, and the usher's box on my ear, had made my head very hot; but this was somewhat relieved by a counter irritation and determination to another part, which you may easily imagine I already felt by anticipation. The more I ruminated on future suffering, the more I felt inclined for present escape—but how? Once more I had recourse to the pages of my friend Mr. Crusoe, but the mercy a bit of any thing could I see there to aid me. After a lapse of half an hour the door was again unlocked, by the landlord, who ushered in two chimney-sweeps, and having given them the necessary directions for cleansing the chimney, he retired, turning the key after him.

Still my overtired comrades slept on soundly; undisturbed either by the noise or jokes of these children of Japan. I, on the contrary, looked on, and envied them at once their mirth and the freedom that gave rise to it. The

tallest sweep, a strong lad of about twenty, remained below, but the younger, who was of my own size, ascended the sooty vent with as little reluctance as though it led to heaven rather than the house-top.

I have a natural curiosity for mechanics of all descriptions, and soon getting into conversation with the disciple of the brush, I found him a sharp good-natured fellow.

Three minutes sufficed to put him in possession of my history, and though his "eyes, albeit unused to the melting mood," did not "drop tears fast as the Arabian trees,"—and so on, still I saw he entered into the frolic of our start in life, as he was pleased to term it, and what's more, pitied our case. I asked him if he would serve a fellow-creature at a pinch. He told me he deserved to be pinched if he would not. Then, added I, let me change clothes with your young sweep, who is up the chimney, and make off with you. He cast an eye towards Fenwick and Manners, and seemed to hesitate.

"If you will, my kind fellow," said I, "you shall have half-a-crown." It was enough. The chimney was soon swept, and the young sweep, who was ready enough for my good suit, stripped himself right willingly. With vast alacrity I donned his sable habiliments and got rid of mine, in which I considered such a sound birching to lie hid; then giving my face a good smear with that new but delightful pinguent, soot, my successor to the claims of Wortley Montague, was made to lie down in a corner of the room and pretend sound sleep. We now gathered up our tools, swept the results of our labours into the bag, and were just on the point of knocking to be let out, when it occurred to me that in the last convenient receptacle there was room for the little fellow we were about to leave behind. In a few minutes we turned his coat and trousers inside out, popped him in, knocked at the door—and after an unimportant colloquy with the landlord about the chimney, were permitted to depart. My new friends I found were gentlemen-sweeps, at all events. They had two neddies in the court-yard of the inn—on one of these the elder partner mounted with his sack, and giving me the other, you may swear we lost but little time in getting quit of the Red George; as soon as possible we let our "cat out of the bag!" and made the most of our way across the country, by the by-roads; which, in justice to my companions, I must say, seemed perfectly familiar to them.

The young sweep was mounted behind me; as we cantered along I questioned him as to his age, and finding it was only a little above my own, I suggested, as we were likely to be comrades for some little time, that it might be proper to stop at the first fair piece of ground, and have a battle; for that thus we might see which was the best man of the two, and so be enabled to live in peace and quiet for the future. The elder sweep greatly admired my proposal, and tried to farther it by all the means in his power; but my antagonist said that I was born a gentleman, and that he therefore should almost be most happy to give me the *pas*.

It was a beautiful bright sunny morning, and as we rode away I waved my new and graceful weapon, the brush, in triumph over my head, and rejoiced again and again in the freedom I had recovered, the novelty of my position, and the adventures before me.

By the way, our elder brother of this precious trinity corporation, amused us with his history; whence it appeared pretty clear, that if he was not the biggest knave in the country, it was not by any fault of his. This opinion I did not conceal; and after remarking on the fertility of his genius as displayed in the numerous tricks he had related, I told him, notwithstanding, that I coveted nothing belonging to him except his donkey.

"Come, come, my young jackanapes," said he, "it's all very fine to hear you talk; but I don't doubt if the truth was out between us, 'twould be very soon seen that you and I have been guilty of all the crimes in the ten commandments."

"Why! how do you mean?" said I, my virtue suddenly alarmed.

"Why! haven't you just confessed to the breaking of the last, in coveting your neighbour's ass?"

"And what then?" returned I, "is there any other of the nine with the breach of which you can charge me?"

"Oh! as to the rest, replied my honest friend, "I've been guilty of breaking all them, myself."

"Thou art a bold knave at the least," said I, laughing at his audacity, "and thy candour charms me only less than thy integrity." As I spoke these words, we turned down a little lane and soon entered a farm-yard. Here, while the two myrmidons were tethering their cattle, the senior informed me that this was the house of his father, to whom he was now going to pay a visit, since chance

had brought him into the neighbourhood. Some two years since he had run away from the paternal roof, as indeed he had told me; and after again congratulating me on following so good an example, we walked into the old man's kitchen, where we found the breakfast on the table and the family at prayers. These over, the worthy couple made us heartily welcome.

The father was a rough genuine blunt Englishman, who lived upon his little patrimony, and had a touch of the Presbyterian in him. A tall lanky graceless body was presented as his eldest son, and the acquaintance of the youngest I had already had the honour of making. Of the latter he appeared to take little notice, and even the former he did not seem very highly to esteem. The old fellow was very kind in his way; and finding, as he said, that there was more talk in me than he should have thought from my age, he began a long discussion on his progeny, which he had once hoped to rear as a credit and a comfort to his age,—the eldest, as a clergyman, and the younger to take his estate. From this he passed on to that very narrow theme, the vanity of all human expectations, and ended by saying, "that although Robert had a deal of learning, and even had been usher to a school, still he had no more sense than a blind bat, while Dick, who'd had every opportunity, chose to make himself a chimney-sweep; and though no lad had more nous, still fewer could have less honesty." To this Dick replied by nothing but a laugh, and went on eating his fat bacon; while Robert, with a most native and lachrymose air, began to remonstrate, and meaning nothing less than to be sharp, replied, "Come, father! you shouldn't say so much, even if 'twere only for your own sake; why, here now, you've made the pair of us out no better than a fool and a rogue; and you *should* remember, that you are nearly allied to both."

After favouring the farmer by devouring a very sufficient quantity of his worldly substance, we all departed for the head-quarters of the master-sweep, which were in one of the most obscure parts of Southwark. Here, having been duly admitted, behold me snatching a brief interval of repose at my first stage on my new road to happiness.

CHAPTER V.

I am tempted by the children of darkness, and fall, becoming metamorphosed into a person of colour, though neither negro, creole, half-caste, nor mulatto.

It will be readily imagined, that in the sombre profession which Fate in her wild freaks had thrust upon me, or I had thrust on Fate, I had no mean opportunity of satisfying my large desires as to the ups and downs of life. As I always had a delicate nose, you may suppose that the soot was peculiarly agreeable; but it was nothing to the aspiring rambles of my vocation, and when first shown the chimney which was to witness my maiden feat, I exclaimed with poor Raleigh, "Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall." Instead of the courtly answer of Elizabeth, my elder companion laid hold of a rope's end, and making a fair demonstration of applying it with vigour, I soon found my way to a higher station.

'Tis a fine healthy exercise, is chimney sweeping! and particularly adapted to pale nervous young gentlemen, like myself. Scorning to be outdone, in so noble an employment, by such low fellows, I soon became not a little expert. The loftiest or the narrowest were nothing to me, and by way of recompense, I never gained that utmost reach of my ambition—the chimney pot, without indulging in the cast of a few sly pieces of tile or slate on those below—though if there is any thing which I abhor, it is mischief. Such being my elevated pursuits in the morning, the day was generally devoted to scientific recreations, such as sleeping in the sun, playing at marbles, toss-pot, pitch-farthing, and other dignified games equally suited to my birth and education. In the evening again, full occupation was found for my leisure moments, in courting a peerless damsel who lived over the way at service. She came from the chaste regions of Rotherhithe originally, and there was her "home." She was a tall strapping Dulcinea, with golden locks, and blue eyes; some few years my senior, an amazon in strength, and a La Maupin in habits.

She had many charms with which to captivate my young

imagination, though I well remember, that with a fine sense of decorum, I thought none so delightful and encouraging, as the well known fact, that she was kissed by every fellow in the parish. Of course I had many rivals, nor would I for the world have dispensed with one of them—so highly did I esteem emulation.

The only gentleman, however, who at all shared her true affections with me, was the highly principled Master Richard Giles, my elder brother of the brush. But our princess was a lady of parts, and chose her lovers accordingly. I won her heart, therefore, by a few occasional spoutings from Ovid and Delectus, of which she confessed her unqualified admiration. In much surprise, I asked her if she understood it? "No, no," said the ingenuous nymph, "but all the same for that, women what are courted have a right to the best of every thing!" This and the winning a wager in a race, with her upon my back, completed the conquest. My rival was flaunted, and I elected the happy lord ascendant of her affections—for the time. Master Dick, you may be sure, did not altogether like this; and one morning, very kindly undertook, as he called it, "To hide me."

Unhappily for him, my lady fair coming by at the time, we both fell upon him with such effect, as proved his share in the business to be less "hide" than "seek." However, my friend determined to be equal with me. You may have guessed he was not over scrupulous as to the means of attaining his end, and will not be surprised consequently to learn the manner in which he effected his object. Having gone with him alone one morning, though somewhat unwillingly, to follow our calling at the house of an old ship-owner, he sent me up to the sooty vent, and staid below himself. Scarcely, however, had my toils been ended, and I about to descend, when to my great surprise and discomfort, a puff of smoke from a wood fire came vollying up the narrow tunnel, and almost suffocated me.

Amiable youth! Thinking, I suppose, that the coldness of the morning air might chill my passion for the adorable Nancy Lewis, he had very kindly kindled a small fire in the grate below; for the purpose, I presume, of keeping up the natural and requisite warmth of heart, which alone could do justice to her merits. He was too kind! I only felt alarmed lest his efforts to assist me should hurt himself, and under this apprehension, was de-

scending to his relief in no slight hurry and chagrin, when I found that a few more mouthfuls of such a vapour, would doubtless terminate my love and life together. Thinking a scream might aid me, I drew readily and heartily enough on my resources, but my case was becoming desperate. Down I slid and scrambled as fast as possible, but the tortuous manner in which chimneys are necessarily built, rendered this a comparatively slow operation. I soon felt convinced that I could only hold out a few seconds more, and that long before I got to the bottom to enjoy the pleasure of tumbling into the fire, I should have the satisfactory consolation of being most effectually cured in the smoke. As for my cries!—St. Patrick, help me! The bulls of Bashan might have roared here for an hour, and yet have been hung-beef after all.

In this emergency, I remembered to have seen the opening of a neighbour's chimney into this one, a few feet lower. Scrambling down until I felt my feet alight in the cavity which marked this happy confluence, and almost dead with terror and exhaustion, I got into the new-discovered passage, and in its cool fresh air could almost think myself in heaven—though most people, I'll be sworn, would have considered it a very different sort of place; all things you see going by comparison.

Haste! haste! thought I, pressing on my new voyage of adventure, lest any kind cook, scullion, or chamber-maid, should take it into their heads to smoke me once more! Down I went! and even in the midst of all my distresses, I could not help chuckling and laughing at what might come next; wondering at the same time in my usual spirit of adventure, where in the name of Fortune I should find myself. I was not a little merry either at thinking how cleverly I had "done" my rival, and anticipated his mortification at beholding me sound and whole once more. The better to enjoy this, I proposed going suddenly back into the room, and falling upon him without farther delay. But much as I needed haste, I was going a little too fast, as you shall see.

Having proceeded the last stages of my course with caution, and found the mouth of the chimney unclosed, I halted for an instant, and perching myself on the bars of a vacant fire grate, looked round the chamber into which I had descended, just as some prying jack-daw might have done. "Caw," said I, "'tis a bed-room!" Its tenant had apparently just risen, and the door was open. Seeing no one in the room, I hopped down—but at this

unlucky instant, I heard an approaching footstep; "Under the bed with me," said I making a dive—but nearly cracking my head against a whole pile of trunks and boxes of all descriptions; where should I fly for concealment?—the case was urgent!—not a cupboard at hand!—the footsteps were approaching—and the horrible door stood open so directly in my way, that I must be seen in crossing it—yet there was such a nice large dressing table by the window with a hanging cover.

"Save me!" said I, "what should prevent my getting *into* the bed"—it was but a leap!—plump I came down into the centre!—over went the clothes, and there laid I as snugly as possible—my only hope being that the person on whose premises I had intruded had risen for the day;—of course I was in the wrong—stump, stump, came the great heavy tread of some fat person, seemingly 'twixt sleeping and waking—some female talking to herself in an under-voice, her teeth chattering with the cold all the while.

"Plague take me! what a fool I was to think of concealment at all," thought I, "it would have been twice as well to have faced the matter boldly—but 'tis too late now!"

Bump! came the owner's heavy person on the bed—back went the clothes!—but I was snuggling at the bottom—down came an awful pair of legs with such a blow on my unhappy back as fairly left me breathless!

"Oh!—oh!—oh!" screamed the lady, jumping up with astonishing alacrity, and running out of the room, uttering a tremendous cry of "the devil's in bed!—the devil's in bed!"

"I wish to my heart that he were!" thought I, looking after her; hardly knowing whether to groan for my loss of wind or crack my sides with laughing at the ridiculous figure which the good woman made—as a great patch of black, showing by most absurd contrast on her white feet and clothes, rendered her ludicrously visible, as she waddled along the passage with a noise that might have astonished even Bedlam.

"Unhappy Mr. Wortley!—in danger when most safe!" was my soliloquy as I heard a horrid sound of coming forces.

Starting from my ambush, I betook myself to the fire-place as instinctively as a badger to his hole.

"There he goes!—there he vanishes up the chimney!" shrieked the poor woman behind me.

"Oh the villain! oh the villain!" exclaimed another.

"Stop him! stop him! stop the thief!" cried a third.

"Make haste, Wortley, up for your life!" said I. In vain; a rough, relentless grasp caught me by the ankle, just as I was lifting aloft my last leg, and back I was dragged into the midst of an astonished circle.

"Why, I do declare it *is* a boy!" cried the poor woman—shrinking back with no slight terror; "ay, and 'tis a chimney-sweep too"—then advancing up to me and shaking her great fist in my face—"What, ye villain, you wanted to ruin my fair name did ye? Oh, ye villain!"

"This is the fellow, Mrs. Roberts, that has stole my plate!" said the man who had pulled me down, addressing the last speaker.

"Ay, that is it; I'll lay my life on it," responded Mrs. Roberts.

"Send for the constable!" bawled a third—"Ay, and bid him make haste," resumed my detainer.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said I, not exactly knowing whether to laugh or cry; but I was cut short,—and elegantly—"None of your lies, you young rascal! I wo'n't believe a word of them! I've got you at last! I've been looking out for you this long time past." "Yes, yes, that we have!" again vociferated Mrs. Roberts, "it's you who have robbed master of all his plate!—this isn't the first time you've been down here, I warrant me; and now, nothing will serve such a young gallows-bird but trying to ruin an honest woman's character!"

"Madam," said I, much touched at her tears, which began to flow—of course, "madam, if I have ruined your character by happening to black your——"

"My what, you young rascal?"

"Your petticoat, madam—I say, if such be the case, I say—though a matter easily effected—I confess I am most sorry for it—though as there are washerwomen in the land——"

"Don't talk to me of washerwomen—you filthy young carrion-crow—here comes the constable, and off you go to jail."

For once the worthy lady spoke the truth. Mrs. Roberts, as principal witness, was desired to array herself—Mr. Atkins, the name of her master, who's gripe by the ankle I still felt, went off to do the same, accompanied

by several and sundry of the domestics; while happy Mr. I—was dragged away to the clink, and there locked-up on a charge of felony. Having been brought before the magistrate and confronted with my accusers—I endeavoured to tell my story; but this the good man, with every possible degree of justice, refused to hear. He said he was not to be blinded at his time of life with a pack of trumpery lies by a sweep. He saw very plainly,—as indeed he said he always did, that I had been in the habit of coming down that chimney, every morning for the last six weeks, to prey upon the plate chest of the respectable Mr. Atkins—for some time past under the charge of the worthy Mrs. Roberts.

“May I ask your worship,” said I, “as you seem to have such a luminous view of the case, to inform us for what reason the worthy lady happened to be out of her room, and where she might happen to be wandering at such an early hour of the morning?—to say nothing of such a walking dress.”

Poor Mrs. Roberts took the hue of scarlet.

“Hold your Impertinence,” said Mr. Atkins, giving me a box on the ear.

“Take him away,” quoth the magistrate, “I see how it is.”

“Ay, please your worship,” said I, “and so do I.” But all my perspicacity was little valued. By great good luck the magistrate escaped committing me—on my solicitation—little as he deserved such kindness at my hands—remanding my case for his serious consideration; albeit an operation which it is rather difficult to imagine him performing.

As I was going off to my dungeon, my young heart was delighted by the presence of my adorable Dulcinea, who having heard of my apprehension, had flown with ridiculous fidelity to offer her assistance. Accepting it with joy, I sent her to my father who brought her back with thanks, effected my enlargement, and liberally rewarded her for her trouble, but greatly to her chagrin deprived her of her lover.

The tables were now turned—good Mr. Magistrate told my father that “he saw at a glance—for he was not to be blinded at his time of life”—how utterly preposterous, &c., &c., &c. So in faith it ultimately turned out.

Due inquiry respecting the alleged robbery now took place, and some odd circumstances transpiring greatly

added to a knowledge of the world's ways on the part of Mr. Atkins—an old rich bachelor and ship-owner. It seems he had long entertained a vast affection for his housekeeper Mrs. Roberts; but unfortunately that lady took a fancy to share it with his footman—nor was this all that they had taken the liberty to share;—to wit, the plate chest: of the last in sooth they all seemed in some sort to have been partners in common—as for instance, Atkins furnished it—John robbed it, and the “honest woman” kept the charge of it. Though I do feel it hard as a true historian to relate such matters of one so careful of “her character.”

To return, then—with as little delay as possible my father had me washed, my mother lectured me, and the butler took me back to school. The first creatures I saw were my old friends Manners and Fenwick running about the play-ground without shoes, and a large placard on each of their backs, bearing the word “FUGITOR.” “Oh, oh!” said I, after the first greetings. “So you’ve changed your genus, have you. Though I confess I see no wings, I perceive you are now of ‘those that fly.’ You used to be of ‘those that creep.’ But ‘every animal,’ as Aristotle says, and so on—I shall soon be one of your class too, I suppose.” I was right—my re-delivery to the constituted authorities was speedily completed, I too was made a shoeless flier—*lucus a non lucendo*, I presume,—and given over to be flogged twice a week until farther orders.

CHAPTER VI.

Contains a new mode of crying fish, much recommended to the fraternities of billingsgate and Grosvenor Square; with other matters.

DISCOURAGING as were the circumstances narrated in the last chapter, it was not the paltry deprivation of sandals which could restrain the soul within, though it considerably damped the soles without, or I should rather say below.

The old song says, and truly, "Love will find out the way," and I had not been sent back long, when my still constant and devoted lady, Nancy—whom I cannot now do less than call the peerless princess of Rotherhithe,—managed to get an interview with me. I was naturally as much delighted to see her, as any captive knight could be; and after long mutual declarations as to our unceasing fidelity and affection, she declared to me the object for which I had been sought.

First, she was inconsolable for my loss. Secondly, her poor old mother had broke her leg, and required her at home; consequently she had left service. Thirdly, her father's 'prentice boy had just been drowned in the Thames, and as the honoured gentleman wanted a youth of talents to supply the loss, she did me the honour to think it was a fine opportunity for me to fill his place; since to this, she was kind enough to say, I was in every way equal. It was indeed nothing less than crying flounders up and down the streets of Rotherhithe! its charming neighbourhood included.

"Well, my dear," said I, "this is evidently an offer which does not occur every day, I should therefore, of course, think myself highly blameable if I did not accept it." Having kissed her ladyship many times for her obliging proposal, we then set to, and planned the mode of my running away for the second time. This I effected one evening under favour of a London November fog of no slight density.

Having thus managed once more to enter on the world's wide stage, I prepared to play my part with becoming consistency. On arriving with my fair conductress in the delightful regions of Nancy's paternal abode, she very kindly procured me a lodging for the night, so that in the morning I presented myself before her sire with all the freshness of an entire stranger. During the interview my Dulcinea looked on as coolly as though she had never seen me before. However I had received my cue as to what I should say, and her revered progenitor having demanded whether I had a good voice for fish, I answered in the affirmative, and was engaged accordingly.

For the first fortnight, every thing went on very smoothly, in accordance with an old proverb, too well-known to be repeated. On the fifteenth day, however, for I am very particular in dates, my new lord and master came rather suddenly upon me and the charming Nancy

most lovingly intwined. It was a very sufficient crime that he caught me with one arm round her neck; but when in aggravation of my offence he found me sitting on a basket full of soles, his rage knew no bounds. He, poor man, had fondly dreamed that I had at least disposed of two-thirds of them an hour before; so seizing up a solitary and wretched Congor eel which lay among the other fish, I saw there was little doubt of his kind intention of tickling my ribs and shoulders with the same.

I never having been able to stand this amusement, moved off to a convenient distance, when the old fellow, seizing hold of his daughter, began to chastise her with all the parental affection so wisely recommended in Mr. Solomon's proverbs. Taking a penny-piece in my pocket, and being a most expert marksman, I made free to send it at his head, which I most effectually paid to the full value of the coin. This induced a chase of me, and the escape of my charmer, when I soon left good Mr. Fish-seller far enough behind. This circumstance, simple as it seemed, made a serious breach in our amicable relations for a day or two, but my fishy friend finding me a curious fellow, behaved all the better for the discovery. Our next fall-out was owing to my simplicity, which let out to a rich customer, the questionable fact of the good monger's possessing two prices; and thus I very promptly stopped any farther sale of his wares in that quarter. Peace having been once more restored, I nevertheless managed with my usual felicity, most finally and fairly, to disturb it as follows. Being in a rather more than ordinary merry mood one afternoon, I took it into my head to break the truth of an old saw, and the custom of my new calling, by venturing on a cry which I was quite sure would be novel in the streets of the mighty metropolis.

Well aware as I was that the most melodious song is nothing when unaided by the superior charms of poetry, I began to vend my commodities by means of the following refined and original Pindaric; duly, and though I say it, very sweetly chanted to a most delectable *arietta*.

THE FISH-BOY'S CRY.

Hark! hark! an honest lad intends,
 For custom hence to strive;
 By arts and tricks no man defends,
 Whose wish it is to thrive.
 Yes, hark!—Here's stinking fish, my friends,
 I'm selling all alive!—
 Stinking fish! Stinking fish!
 Better not a king could wish,
 Soles, flounders, dabs, I long to sell,
 Just send a dish,
 You'll like them well,
 My stinking fish, all alive oh!

The custom brought round by this chaste and unique model from the antique, was wonderful. My basket was soon half cleared, and would speedily have been emptied, when the poor contemptible owner of these dainties turning round a corner, popped full upon me, uttered a long string of invectives, called me, among many other terms, a young thief, and triumphantly jeered me with not knowing that he was in the next street.

"No, faith! that I did not," replied I, rather nettled, "for I knew well enough before to-day that asses have long ears."

The stinking fish might have stood, but this Midasian allusion to another order of natural history, was beyond all endurance. Accordingly he fell upon me with a degree of furor that would have been very creditable to a mad bull. I, in my turn, threatened him with the visitation of my family, whose name and address in my rage, and almost unknown to myself, I let slip.

The matter passed like all earthly matters will; and in the additional kindness of the dear daughter I made up for the parent's harshness. You may imagine my astonishment, on the ensuing day, at dinner time, to see a carriage drive up to the door, and in walk Edward Wortley Montagu, senior.

The old gentleman took me by the ear, and bundled me into his carriage, without even allowing me time to make my adieus to the object of my affections. I asked leave to change my dress, as I still had in my possession a better suit, in which I last ran away; not to mention that my present garments in more than one sense savoured strongly of the trade.

However, I was told there was no time. The carriage was just about to drive off, when I called to them to stop, and desired the footman to bring out my old tray on which I used to hawk my master's property.

"What do you want with that, sir?" angrily demanded my father.

"Why, please you, sir," I replied, "since you take a fancy to the dress, it's a pity we shouldn't bring away the paraphernalia, you'd then have the costume complete."

"Drive on, coachman," said my father to his servant, without deigning me another word. On went the old fat rogue of a coachman, seeming, like a wooden wedge in a falling oak, to rejoice in the division of the tree that nourished it!

But eyes are quicker even than fat coachmen. One glance of bright intelligence passed 'twixt me and my princess, as she stood at the door with the corner of her apron all ready for her eyes, which seemed to say—we shall meet again yet, despite of all the efforts of cruel and heart-dividing fathers.

Parents are highly to be blamed for their conduct to their offspring, particularly when we consider what a dutiful generation the latter compose!

Well, I was no sooner arrived at home, than I was returned to Westminster, with even still greater expedition than on the former occasion. Finding that my friends seemed to take a great delight in sending me back, I, with all my natural goodness of heart, very affectionately determined to give them a fresh occasion for the indulgence of that propensity. With this view, and by aid of my lady Nancy of Rotherhithe, I decamped once more, and, extending our pleasures as experience gave practical wisdom and boldness to our plans, we now flattered ourselves that we had done the thing effectually in spite of all opposition.

The marked success which attended us in this expedition, I know not whether most to attribute to myself or lady; we must therefore be mutually content to share between us any fame that a generous posterity may award. Certainly I may say this for Lady Nancy, however slight the part she had in planning our new adventures, she went through the execution of them with an energy and determination to be found only in a heart devotedly at-

tached, and inspired with all the heroism and courage which the truest poetry of the passion can diffuse.

The amiable creature having found out a vessel about to sail for a foreign port, we agreed to dress up as two cabin boys, and volunteer together. As we bore every appearance of being stout lusty fellows, we were received as part complement on the very next night after I left Westminster, and on the ensuing morning, our new craft having dropped down the river, we soon began to feel those internal miseries generally attendant on a first sea voyage. Recovering from these we found ourselves running free down channel, and bound for Cadiz.

"And a very pleasant port too!" said I to Nancy, recounting as many of its delights as I then knew.

"If that be the case," replied my darling, "as soon as we get there we'd better run away again, for this sort of sea-life is very different from what I expected, and I don't think it'll altogether agree with me."

"Very possibly not, my dear," said I, "but the fact is, from every thing I can see, it does appear to me, that running away from a school is one thing, and running away from a ship is another; and, skilled as I now am in these matters, we may find the task somewhat harder than we anticipate—but all in good time—we shall see." And accordingly, we did see, for the day after these sage remarks, some funny circumstances divulged the sex of my companion, to the wonder and astonishment of the enlightened crew.

Not a few were the jokes and jeers I had to endure, nor were these all, I soon felt the effects of the discovery in more ways than one. Every soul on board seemed determined to enter the lists against me; the master of the vessel at the head of my opponents. But, unluckily for them, they were not deeply versed in the windings of a woman's heart, and went the wrong way to work; every man of them starting on the supposed notion, that the way to win her soul was to kick my body. As, however, I came of quite a wrong stock to take this quietly, I seized every opportunity of returning the compliment, and soon got licked into a very respectable degree of hardness; for there is this advantage in being maltreated when a boy, you get a very proper notion of how to deal with a bully, when a man; and every youth will occasionally meet with dishonourable wretches of this stamp. By *those* who have a *thorough* knowledge of their history they are found

alike abject and infamous in private life, as they are insolent and overbearing in public, and only to be brought to sense and shame by the last and worst of arguments—personal violence. The more unkindly that my lady Nancy beheld her adorer treated by those who were actuated by that meanest of motives—envy—the more determinately she rejected all their advances, and remained constant.

Nay, more than this, becoming speedily inured to exertions by the fatigues she underwent, for she would perform all her duties,—she soon made no scruple of coming to my aid, when attacked by superior force, and a very pretty fight she could make of it long before we reached the Spanish port, while aloft there was scarcely a more expert climber in the ship.

This produced an infinite number of jokes from the sailors, while the captain, who was an Irishman, declared if he only knew where to find a few more women like her, he'd rejoice to *man* the old craft wi' none other. In fact, by the time we had reached Cadiz, they had all taken such a prodigious liking to my princess, that I found it would be doubly difficult for her to get off, though I could easily conceive their being exceedingly ready to part with myself. I determined, therefore, to make the attempt on the very first night that we should be in communication with the shore, when, in all probability, the sailors would be tipsy. My calculations were verified, and the Lady Nancy concurring in the propriety of the step, we took leave to borrow one of the ship's boats, which we rowed to land, and than leaving it to shift for itself, took at once to our heels, made quietly through the town, purchased some provisions, and set off on the road to Seville.

CHAPTER VII.

Introduces a man of conscience and scruples, from the scrupulous north, though found in the latitudes of the south, and holding a somewhat novel view of faiths in general.

THIS direction we now took at the especial request of my fair companion, who kindly informed me that she had long heard the *civil* oranges were the finest in the world—though to be sure she never knew from whence they came until I told her the other day. “And why,” said she, “are they called the civil oranges?”

“Oh, my dear,” replied I, “because they are so plentiful, that unless you are most civil in your behaviour, the people pelt you with them as you walk along the streets!”

“Indeed!” said she, and perceiving that this was given as a reason, she thought, like many other learned people, that she must accept it as such, and on we went.

As it was a beautiful moonlight night, and we were in high spirits at our escapade, we trudged along at no mean pace; careless of all the perils that might be supposed to surround two such adventurers, in a strange land, without money, or even the common tongue of the country in which we were.

But what would have disheartened others gave us fresh courage; and having nothing to lose, we had long since resolved to have nothing to fear.

Walking on until we became exceedingly tired, we sat down on a rough sort of sailor’s great coat which Nancy had kindly accepted from one of her late shipmates—the more kindly indeed, as he had never offered it to her—and then pulling out our supper, we fell to very heartily, and were surprised by sleep in the midst of what I thought a very entertaining *tête-à-tête*, although the result might not appear to warrant that description.

Day had scarcely begun to dawn, when I was aroused by Nancy; who recalled my attention to affairs of this world, by pointing out an advancing cavalcade of what proved to be water-carriers, proceeding towards the good town of Cadiz with sundry butts of the limpid element,

mounted on a rude car, and drawn by mules. Having duly stared at our strange costume, they passed on.

The sun rose splendidly on our right hand, displaying to our enchanted view a country, which I had then never seen equalled. While my lady and her adorer were sitting wrapt in all that ecstasy which beautiful scenery never fails to inspire in highly cultivated minds, our attention was attracted by the jingling of bells, and looking in the direction in which the last set of passengers had disappeared, we now perceived advancing towards us, a muleteer with several of his animals loaded, others not. As they passed by, the Spaniard, who was a young, and though a vulgar, still a good-looking fellow, suddenly halted with a view of admiring the long straying flaxen locks of my blue-eyed charmer.

Having given her the salutation of the day, she in return gave a hitch to her inexpressibles in the true Tar style, and vaulting on one of the vacant beasts, seemed to consider her seat as a permanent and settled matter. He, for his part, looked grave for an instant, and then seeming instinctively to perceive how the matter truly stood, a smile stole over his stolid countenance, as he turned towards me.

What his worship might have wanted I neither know nor care; it might have been money, but of this commodity having none to give, it naturally followed that I could give him none. Pretending to think, therefore, that he asked my permission to allow him the favour of her company, I honoured him with two slow nods of the head, as much as to say, permission granted; and following Nancy's mule, we moved onwards once more, the muleteer riding on one side of her ladyship and I walking on the other.

As we went along, I naturally inculcated upon my fair friend, the absolute necessity that existed of our speedily obtaining the accomplishment of the Spanish language, advising her at once to proceed in taking her first lesson. By way of setting her a good example, I went on by signs to inquire from the muleteer the names of the various things I should be likely to want for breakfast; having previously obtained such few instructions as were necessary to trying my hand in the beggar line: for I thought there was every chance of its coming to that soon—and one likes to be prepared for these little changes.

Amusing ourselves in this manner by the way, we at

length entered the town of Xerez de la Frontera, which, as every one knows, or ought to know, is built by the little river Guadalete. Here I was not sorry to learn we were to breakfast—or not, just as we pleased, it seems—a very awkward addition, since the muleteer was for the present going no farther.

Now it so happened, that I did please it extremely, for I never felt more ravenous, but how the affair was to be managed, I could not for the life of me wholly understand. But I always flattered myself that where I failed, Nancy would help me—and when she failed—why then I knew I must help her.

In this, I conceive, lies all the beauty and the harmony of Mr. Plato's system, though fifty hundred commentators would have puzzled over it long enough ere they had drawn from it so useful a design. For adding sublimity to an author's conceptions—give me a commentator: mystery and obscurity have ever been true sources of the sublime.

Having walked into the little posada, at which our friend put up his beasts, I soon beheld the operation of feasting going on in all quarters. Ah me, how exquisite was the odour of the chocolate; how savoury appeared the omelettes; with what a smack were the olla podrida devoured; even a gaspacho seemed a delicacy, and coarse bread and garlic not to be despised. Much, indeed, did I long for a draught of that generous wine, which I perceived tickling the palates of most present, myself excepted, more especially as I remembered that this was a town celebrated for that vintage, the products of which we are fondly supposed to drink under the name of sherry. In this dilemma I asked my Lady Nancy what we should do for breakfast.

"Go without," said she rather gruff, very philosophically.

"Yes, yes," replied I, "that's all very fine; but indeed you can't tell how exceedingly I shall feel such a piece of resignation"—laying my hand at the same time over a most sensitive region. "But at any rate let us leave this place, for I think the fire only burns the more by thinking on the frosty Caucasus. We must beg a meal somewhere, and so let us just choose whether it shall be simple or compound—whether by singing a ballad we should make any return to the charitable, or whether we should demand their alms for the satisfaction of behold-

ing us, since there can be no doubt that we are two very pretty young people."

"As to singing," replied her ladyship, "hang me if I can sing on an empty stomach, that's plain!"

"Well then, my dear, I see no chance of your singing on a full one, which is worse than plain, inasmuch as it's downright ugly. But here comes the muleteer from putting up his beasts, what does this fellow want?" I' faith, it was that which very few mortals care to desire—nothing less than the company of two moneyless people to share his meal.

"Come," said I, as we sat down to table with him, "it's worth while, I perceive, to have a companion with a full bust, flaxen locks and blue eyes," and without more ado, I fell to like a young wolf upon the basin-full of chocolate that was put before us—though as yet, by the by, this ferine class have not shown any violent predilection for chocolate as a necessary article of consumption.

"This is very fine porridge," said my Nancy, using a word she had heard from some of her Scotch shipmates, and scarcely knowing what to make of chocolate, in which her spoon could almost stand upright.

"Parritch," echoed a voice infinitely to my surprise, and close at hand; "was it parritch or bergoo ye mentioned, lassie?" demanded a huge tall figure, advancing towards us from the opposite corner of the room, in the awe-inspiring dress of a soldier of the Holy Brotherhood—speaking, if my ear did not deceive me, in the Scottish accent, but bearing externally every mark of a true Spaniard; if we except a pair of high cheeks, that told more of the Macs than the Dons.

"Conscience!" said he, advancing up to Nancy, and then taking a step backwards after a close scrutiny.

"Is it a laddie or a lassie that ye are?—Tell me, mon!"

"Oh? why, ahem! my younger brother," said I, stammering out something as I saw my young companion's colour rise.

"Whew! a brother, mon, is it?" said our new acquaintance, drawling out his words in a most suspicious manner.

"And how came ye here, and what are ye?" It was now my turn to be confused.

"Why, please you, sir, I'll tell you the whole truth of the matter," said Nancy, quickly recovering that aptness for veracity which so distinctly belongs to her dear sex.

"We are young sailors, sir, as you may see, and came from England to Cadiz, in a trader, some little time since, but the captain was a very bad man, and happening to get a little too merry a night or two ago, he sailed away without a word of warning, and left me and my brother behind."

As she concluded this doleful tale, she proceeded of course to call the tears into her eyes, and then with infinite address wiped them away. Such judicious conduct could not fail of due effect. The soldier of the Holy Brotherhood softened wonderfully towards her, and seating himself at hand, at once tendered his services as interpreter, and offered to be as useful to us in any other mode as circumstances would permit.

In return for our candid communications, we learnt that he was a native of Aberbrothock; had served some time as a mercenary in the Low Countries, and ultimately wandered into Spain, where coming across an old brother soldier, who was an Irish Roman Catholic, in the service of the Inquisition, the latter had offered him a similar berth at the petty cost of becoming a convert to the reigning faith. Here, as honest Donald informed us, he had "had mair scruples than he altogether admired, but becoming at last convinced that religion was given to us for some mair useful purpose than that of standing in our light, he had, after mature consideration, become" as he termed it, "a convict to the Romans." "Ye'll no' be mentioning this if ye should be in the North sune, and hear my name by any chance," prudently added Donald, because, as he said, "Most of his kin in that country had never enjoyed the benefit of travel, they might perhaps entertain preceese and prejudicial notions on auld points of doctrine; and mair than this ye see, it hath always been my pious intention to take up wi' the kirk ance mair, should Providence ever bring me back to the auld country." Begging him not to be disturbed, I said I had no intention of migrating again for some little time, and even then, would maintain as profound a silence as the most preceese doctrinaire could require. With this, he was satisfied; and asking if he could be of any service, I told him that we both wanted a livelihood—but nothing more.

Here the mule driver, who, by means of interpretation, had been enjoying a share of our conversation, informed us that a good woman, the keeper of another posada, who lived only a few streets off, was in want of the services

of two such lads as myself and brother, to help in the domestic offices of her house. That we had only to present ourselves, and be content to work for our keep, to ensure the place. I will show you the house forthwith, added the open-hearted young Spaniard, "and indeed would speak to her in your behalf, but I cannot do that with effect, we are always on such bad terms; for you must know we are cousins."

"Ah!" said the man of scruples, "I understand, but if you will show us the house, I doubt not but a gentleman of my character will have weight enough with the honest woman to effect the rest."

Accordingly, off we trudged, but scarcely had proceeded a dozen yards, when our progress was arrested by a group of boys and other idlers surrounding a man somewhat curiously employed. "See ye now to that; there's a funny gaberlunzie," said the holy Brother, stopping and pointing him out.

The object of our attention had seized a dog, and holding the body down with his hand and knee, had inserted a hollow cane into the struggling animal's mouth. After puffing and blowing through this, for some time, with great exertion, the fellow suddenly withdrew it, and starting to his feet before the dog could bite, made a profound bow to the crowd. Waving his cane with much dignity, he exclaimed "Gentlemen, it is not so easy to blow up a dog!"—He then made another profound bow and departed. The crowd having enjoyed a hearty laugh at the expense of one who seemed no way disconcerted at it, they followed him on his way, and we once more pursued ours, the muleteer bidding us adieu as soon as we came within sight of his cousin's house,—since, as he said, relations always agreed best at a respectful distance.

Signor Donald now proved himself as good as his word, and by means of the influence which his dreaded dress ever inspires in this bigoted country, he did our business most effectually. This settled, he withdrew to attend to that of any body else, not happening, unfortunately, to have any of his own; for every one knows that it is solely for such legitimate purposes, that gentlemen of his office are employed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Treats of my election into a musical society, the members of which are vastly skilled in playing on the stiletto, the pick-lock, and other curious instruments.

As prudent Donald had forborne—doubtless for some very good purposes of his own—to hint to our new mistress any suspicions as to the sex of my fair brother, I took the earliest opportunity of advising her to be more cautious. I said also that if she could somewhat stint that universal benevolence towards all mankind, which made her show so much of her golden ringlets; it might not prove worse for her in the end.

Oddly enough she followed my advice, and as her portion of occupations, did not bring her often under the eye of her mistress, affairs went on very quietly for some little time.

Among many others who used our house of entertainment, was an itinerant band of musicians. They were accustomed to season their cups with sundry narratives of such adventures as happened to them while roving from town to town. As these were generally very funny, and often very agreeable, they soon fired the fancies of Nancy and myself. Our present abode had long since grown very irksome; the landlady was extremely mean and parsimonious, almost denying us a sufficiency of food, and we determined to quit on the first opportunity.

This was soon obtained; Nancy, with her usual facility for making acquaintances, was pretty well known to most of the "vagrant train," indeed a little more than I altogether admired—and they soon agreed to receive us into their numbers. In another week they were to start themselves for the city of Seville, and promised to halt for a night at a given spot upon the road, a few miles out of Xerez, that we might join them. In the mean while we were to save up what money we could, to bring into the general fund.

This plan was adopted to avoid any awkward suspicions falling on so respectable a body.

Accordingly, late one night, after the family had retired to rest, we set out upon ramble the second; our new associates having proceeded in the forenoon of the same day. We had not advanced very far, when we met a scout placed to intercept us on the road, and serve as a guide to the main body of the party; who were enjoying themselves in a sylvan retreat hard by.

The remains of a plentiful supper were strewn around our future companions, as we entered among them, and the leathern bottle was circulating very freely. We received a hearty welcome, were made to sit down within the rude sort of hut, or rather tent, which they had erected, for the spot was an old and favourite haunt, and then as the hearts of our elders expanded, there crept forth a few choice histories, which would not have so exactly suited the auditory of our late posada.

I speedily found myself among as honourable a set of knights of the posts as I could desire; or to speak plain English, as vile a set of rogues as could well be imagined. One had escaped from the galleys, and another had recently been liberated from prison, a third had commenced his honest fortunes in the world by the robbery of his parents, a fourth was travelling to banish the remembrances of too free an amusement with the stiletto, and so on. The women were very little better—some somewhat worse, if it were possible; and, in short, I found myself at once elected into a republic, so happily equal, that no man could reproach another.

Having naturally been blessed with tastes as fine as their principles, they made music their ostensible calling, and pilfering their real object. Like my honest friend Donald, I still retained some silly scruples about me, and at once expressed to Nancy, my fears as to the ultimate issue of our fate under such peculiar guidance. But the good soul bid me be comforted, since by advice of the leader of our band, and the better to secure our felicity, she had obliged her late mistress by borrowing the contents of a little money-box—the hiding-place of which she had discovered some time since, and only deferred the forcing of its lock until a few minutes before our departure.

This intended piece of consolation, I must say, fell far short of its aim. Already I beheld the officers of justice in close pursuit, and all the horrors of a jail, and the ignominy of such suspicions as could not fail to attach to

me, despite of any asseverations I might make. As I had the advantage of being able to speak in a language unknown to the rest of the party, I remonstrated with her in an under voice, but severely. I upbraided her too with inconstancy, as a plain proof of which I mentioned the fact of her taking advice from a low fellow, a stranger, and concealing its tendency from the gentleman with whom she first set out upon her travels. She recriminated, we had a very respectable squabble, I got exceedingly tipsy, and fell fast asleep.

Noon had nearly passed before I awoke on the following day. The sun was shining warmly down upon me, but a dull, heavy ache was upon my heart. Jumping up, I looked around for our late comrades. The tent was struck, the brands of last night's fire were smouldering upon the ground, and around it were strewed the fragments of provender on which we supped, but not another vestige of them was to be seen, if I except, by the by, an old guitar, and a suit of sufficiently ragged clothes, which seemed expressly laid out at my head.

At first, I discredited the conviction that came upon me, but, having called on Lady Nancy, by name, several times, and received no reply, beyond the murmurings of a little brook, that was close at hand, I was compelled, however unwillingly, to believe myself deserted. I need not have been in much doubt, however, for the scene around me told the tale well enough. She had evidently become alarmed at those compunctious visitings, for which she on the preceding night called me a "milk-sop," and having communicated her fears to the others, they had determined on leaving me to shift for myself.

With regard to her leaving me, I was not much surprised; nay, on the whole, rather thankful that she had not left me with a stiletto hole in my doublet. I had before suspected some parts of her conduct, and now found myself right. Companionship always flings a charm round those it links together, and having shed a proper quantity of tears to the memory of our past love, I thought myself, on the whole, well quit of the melodiously inclined society. Thanking her, in my own mind, for the kind feeling that had saved me from ill-treatment, as well as the interference, which had doubtless left behind for my use the old guitar, and mendicant suit, I took up the one, slipped on the other, and made off for a better cover. Imagining it not very improbable that some good

alguazil might otherwise be coming to compliment me on the fresh change in my prospects.

The world was once more before me, and once more I proceeded to make the most of it. Stealing forth as evening began to fall, I took to the high road in a very fine state of fasting, and in about two hours arrived at a little village. As music in Spain is the recreation of every one, I had by this time learnt to play a very decent accompaniment on the national instrument, and my voice having been very finely cultivated at Rotherhithe, I found no obstacle to my success in the minstrel line, except that native bashfulness, which has always oppressed me—more or less. My hunger, however, soon enabled me to swallow this, together with a supper which a good Samaritan bestowed upon me, in consideration of my singing a song, which nobody could understand; in which predicament I may fairly say the singer himself was included. Having thus procured a shelter for the night, I rose with the sun, and recommenced my journey, always having before my eyes the over-politeness of alguazils, and their anxiety for one whom the law would be so delighted to entertain.

In this way I progressed by slow stages towards Seville, which town, mindful of the proverb, I was determined at all hazards to behold.—Sometimes I was relieved at a peasant's humble hearth, sometimes feasted in the hall or kitchen of a peer.—Sometimes I indulged a convent with an opportunity of exercising its charity, and sometimes I ventured on the frugal fare of a road-side recluse. Many opportunities of getting into "something permanent" presented themselves, but I could not believe my precious self secure, until I once more found myself mixed up with the crowded mass of a large city, and in four days from my desertion by the lady Nancy, I drew nigh to the place of my self-elected destination.

CHAPTER IX.

Which contains the tragical results of vanity and passion: and by which, when you read it, you are advised to profit.

THE night was rapidly falling, as I entered the renowned city of Seville. Fatigued with my long walk, and not over elated at finding myself in such a living desert, without friends or very little money to procure their semblance, I paced slowly onward in a deep reverie; now looking around on the spectacle that presented itself to my eye, and now considering the line of my future operations.

"It is not so easy to blow up a dog!" thought I—"though to be sure!"—recalling an old Spanish proverb—"there are more ways of drawing a cat out of a well than by the bucket!" But courage, good heart! thou hast not hitherto failed me, and for the present, I will just take a stare at this old city while the light remains.—Then for an humble supper and trust to my guitar for a bed.

As I finished my soliloquy I turned down the corner of a street, behind two men, who from their mien and dress, I conceived to be a nobleman and his servant. The latter hastening a-head of his master, directed his steps towards the entrance of a large and heavy-looking mansion, as if for the purpose of getting the door opened. Having cast a hasty look at the exterior of the house, I was about to pass on, when my curiosity was attracted by a figure wrapped in a cloak, and leaning in the shadow of the projecting windows.

At this instant the gentleman crossed over, and though hardly conscious why, I followed him. Scarcely had he arrived abreast of the stranger in the cloak, when the folds of this garment, falling from the person it concealed, I beheld a preparatory movement of the hand, with the fatal purport of which, I was but too well acquainted.

To utter a loud cry, spring forward, and strike the end of my walking-stick in the face of the intending assassin, was but the work of an instant. In another, I heard the sound of some steel instrument ring on the ground, and

was myself laid senseless by a heavy blow. Coming round in the course of a few minutes, great was my surprise, at finding myself lying on a rich brocaded bed surrounded by a bevy of attendants, and the gentleman whose life I conceived I had saved.

"Are you much hurt, my good lad?" said he, with an air of concern.

"No, indeed, not greatly," said I, seating myself upright in a manner sufficiently brisk for a wounded man, "but in truth," casting my eyes on some fragments beside my bed, "though I am not hurt, I perceive that my poor Nancy is," pointing to the broken guitar, "and I am sorry for it. 'Twas an instrument of no bad tone; and what is a ballad-monger without his instrument!"

At this the signor smiled, and saying, "that he was greatly my debtor," gave orders to his domestics as he left the room, that I should have all I required.

"Then first he must have the pleasure of losing a little blood," said a grave personage, drawing out the necessary implements.

"Wait till he asks it, good Mr. Doctor!" I replied, springing over the other side of the bed, with vast alacrity.

"How then, child!"—returned the Medico, "do you not know that I am his lordship's own body surgeon?"

"Then by the same sign, Signor," said I, "you are not mine. At present, look you, I have no more blood in my body than I want for my heart, seeing I have fasted since this morning; and the only medicine I will consent to take at your hands, is a good supper."

The surgeon being kind enough at this juncture, to furnish me with a look of profound contempt, these good-natured fellows the servants, who never treat a man of science disrespectfully in the houses of the rich, at once declared me of the right mode of thinking, and led me forth for a hearty commendation to Master Philip of the buttery.

Soon contriving to gain this delightful retreat and leave the doctor behind, I found myself amid the best of everything, and fell to accordingly.

"Poor boy!" said the steward, as he witnessed the devastation I committed on the paste and the bottle. "He lays to as though he eat for to-day and to-morrow both!"

"Hold, my worthy friend," replied I, "it is necessary that I should first eat for to-day and yesterday!"

"Thou art a merry-hearted chicken, at the least of it!" said one of two of the menials, who were sauntering around; "and who or what art thou? and how camest thou so hungry in our good city?—for thy tongue bespeaks another birth-place than that of Spain!"

On this I sounded a parley of mutual information, requiring first to know where I was, and who I had served, and then giving them, like an Irish witness, as much of my own history as I thought proper,—for there is no virtue more charming to mankind at large than candour—when the truth is in their favour.

But let that pass.—I now learnt that I had been so fortunate as to aid a Spanish grandee of some rank and more money. The former gratified himself and the latter his dependants. It seemed that he was possessed of many blessings, of which he was not duly sensible, and among the rest, a wife and daughter. As for his names and titles, I found it would take me at least a week to learn them with any decency, so for the present I contented myself with digesting only two of them—Julio De Romarina. Scarcely had I finished my own little narration in return for the butler's, when Madame Antonia, the family duenna, sent one of her women with a message from Don Julio's wife—Donna Lorenza—desiring my presence as soon as I had refreshed myself.

Hastening to compose my dress, I was presented to her ladyship, who received me very kindly, though naturally, by her mien, a woman of the pride of Lucifer. She certainly, too, had something of this honest gentleman's beauty, and was, I must say, a most majestic-looking virago.

The history of my adventures being again gone through, with such little additions and suppressions as my genius suggested or my necessities required, she thanked me for the service I had rendered to the family as heartily as if she really meant it; and farther, to prevent any suspicions of her sincerity, she offered me an appointment in her household—a sort of misbegotten office between a page and a secretary—a sort of shoe-tier in particular, or doublet-smoother in general. "Madame," said I, bowing to the ground, "I am but a lad of poor spirit, and the appointment suits me exactly." The name of secretary sounding not a little romantic and entertaining to my ears;—at any rate, "here's something fresh," and pro-

vided it be amusing, a fido for your dignity. In short, I at once agreed to enter on my novel capacity.

I was now presented to one on whom I had from time to time been gazing with no slight admiration—the only child of my new mistress—Donna Lucia.

This lady, who had been sitting in the room when I first entered, was about six-and-twenty, and certainly the most thrilling beauty—but there are too many sorrowful and humiliating thoughts connected with her history to permit my attempting a description of her person. She had all the fire and dignity of her mother, together with the vivacity of her own youth, and a something about the eye which I dare not characterize.

Throughout the interview she remained perfectly at her ease, and though I felt flattered by the repetition of her gaze, its coolness somewhat disconcerted me. These preliminaries over, the steward received orders to send for a mercer, to whom my mistresses—for I soon found I had two—gave directions for a handsome fit-out in my behalf.

Well, said I, as I went to bed, every man sees changes in this world, and Wortley Montague bids fair to know a few in time. It will indeed be hard if in all of these I am equally frustrated in my novel proposition of happiness; surely every thing promises fairly now; an easy berth and a handsome mistress. Yesterday I was a minstrel—I can't say much for my felicity in that line—the day before a muleteer—no, nor in that—now I am a servant. But, come, let me have good hopes. If fate is prosperous, and I only take kindly to the arts of tergiversation and pilfering, there seems little fear of my acquitting myself with all due credit.

But far more funny things were in store for me than I expected, as you shall hear. Out of regard to my birth, I was appointed to be found at the table of the Duenna. Discovering at once the strong influence, and the weak side of this good lady, who squinted not a little, and drank a great deal, I took the earliest opportunity of telling her in a delicate manner, that her good looks were of no ordinary cast, and that nothing improved the complexion so much as brandy. To my surprise she did not receive this as any great piece of news, though she told me I was a good child for saying so; but in return she forthwith commended me to her mistresses, as a lad of

great discretion, and they, on the strength of her recommendation, acted accordingly.

Scarcely had I, with no slight pride and pleasure, finished the arraying of myself in my new finery, when I was informed that Donna Lorenza required me to accompany her to mass, and carry the missal. While in the very act of stepping forth on this praiseworthy occasion, a message was brought to the devout lady, from her daughter, who, being, as she said, too ill to go to church herself, entreated that I might be left at home to play her a few English airs.

For my part, I must say, I thought she had quite enough airs of her own; more especially, when I found the fair Lucia's indisposition of no more dangerous cast than those commonly known as the teazy-wheezeys—a name given in contradistinction to the-pepsilels. The one importing that a lady would be much worse if she were not much better; and the other, that she would be much better if she were not much worse. Having heard with kind approbation the slight stock which I possessed, she desired once more to hear all my little oddities in the way of adventure, taking an especial care to search most minutely into those which related to my lady Nancy of Rotherhithe; that fair but false companion of my perils.

This conduct rather surprised so innocent and ingenuous a youth as myself; and whatever feelings they engendered, they certainly were not those of dislike to the lovely, but somewhat imperious inquirer—who, by way of distinction, I shall in future term my young mistress; reserving the more generic title for her parent. Having stood considerably in the way of my edification in the morning, Donna Lucia very kindly made amends, by taking me with her to vespers, at which she insisted on my kneeling beside her; infinitely more to the delight of my vanity than my knees, which had not then been much accustomed to such a Popish ceremonial.

Thus things went on; sometimes one lady patronised me, sometimes the other. In particular, I observed, that they were both very fond of taking me to mass; and both in turn made an offer of attempting my conversion. Of course I embraced with avidity the proposals of the pair; internally at the same time resolving to be brought to the faith of neither. I observed moreover in my attendance on these ladies, that both of them seemed strangely anxious to keep from each other, the interest they mutually

took in my welfare; so that although both were marvelously kind to me when apart, I no sooner happened to be in the double presence of mother and daughter, than they seemed agreed to put on their coldest looks, and combine to sink me from the proselyte to the page. Of my two mistresses, I must say the mother took the greatest pains with my progress, and the daughter the greatest pleasure. The former would insist on my repeating creeds and aves without number; made me read with her the lives of the saints, and not a few of the martyrs; corrected the errors of my pronunciation; attempted once or twice to make me confess, and desired my acceptance of the symbol of their faith, carved in solid silver, and richly set with gems.

Donna Lucia on the other hand was contented with a gentle pressure of the hand as if by accident when holding the book at mass—making me accompany her sometimes in the vesper service; and finally, presenting me with a braid of her hair to suspend the present of her mother; for this, I very stupidly revealed one day to her sight, though I took great care to preserve the silence of the grave between the one and the other.

One thing I could not help remarking, which was, that both ladies seemed to lay great stress on my birth as a gentleman, and the facts of my being a foreigner and a heretic, as palliating excuses to themselves for the little freedoms to which they admitted one in such a dependent station. The fact of my having saved Don Julio De Romarina's life, they never once dreamed of mentioning. Still there was a mystery about the family, which I could not solve. There were more points than one, on which scandal thought fit to have its run; the servants also were not slow to talk; though of this favour, I must say, they are generally very liberal. You may be sure, however, that I was not particularly anxious to pick a hole in the doublet of one whose house afforded me every luxury I could desire.

Still I could not shut my eyes either to the dispositions or practices of my two mistresses, and, indeed, in very little time it would have been much the same if I had. This, however, I did still more carefully than ever—I shut my mouth, which I doubt not they infinitely preferred. My quiet was, however, soon interrupted.

While I viewed Donna Lucia as one, from temporary position, my superior, I cared not what she did. When,

however, that distinction had been levelled by herself, far different emotions sprung up within my bosom; and a burning jealousy was the result. Though so much older than myself, I found too late that she had completely possessed herself of my affections, while she appeared only to have half surrendered her own.

Her image was ever present to my thoughts—she mingled in my dreams—she became a part of my existence. I now perceived with a feeling of rage and fury, that there were hours in the day and evening, when no account could be given of her, by any one in the household. The generality of our people believed her at mass, or in her own rooms. To the latter, I had free access; and I soon found that her time was not devoted to either.

Still I carefully concealed the burning thoughts to which these circumstances gave rise; suspicions the more confirmed by all that had passed between us. If any one was in this secret it was the duenna; but from her nothing could be drawn, and I hardly dared to approach the subject but in the most guarded way; fearful lest it should bring down a long impending ruin on my own head.

Thus affairs went on for some time, until at length I was so stung by what was passing in my own mind, that flinging aside all ceremony, I taxed Lucia to the face with the misconduct of which I thought her to be guilty. Instead of flying out into the overwhelming rage which I expected, she coolly replied to me with kindness and denials which I no longer esteemed or believed.

From that day I had not a doubt upon my mind—the torture which I underwent may be readily imagined, and I may truly say, that I had my share of the deep punishment which all of us were doomed so shortly and so fearfully to undergo. In the conduct of both the mother and daughter, there was one marked failing, which in ordinary mortals passes for a mere foible. Here, however, it was the source of every evil passion, and the cause of one of the deepest and most humiliating domestic tragedies I ever knew. As it may warn some who stand upon a similar and seemingly secure precipice, I shall mention it. That failing was vanity! Donna Lucia and her mother were two of the vainest women it is possible to conceive. For the gratification of this despicable weakness, I found there was no point to which they would not descend, no crime of which they would not be guilty. At the very moment of time to which I now refer, Donna Lucia had,

to my certain knowledge, no less than four proposals of marriage, any one of which she might have accepted at will, having been left—an unusual thing in Spain—the uncontrolled heiress to a large fortune.

But she infinitely preferred a train of suitors, graced with four handsome cavaliers, as her slaves, to electing any one of them as her master. But her choice was a wanton dereliction from principle, and proved as fatal as it deserved to be.

Of Don Julio, I have said nothing. He was an indolent man, of mixed propensities, but wholly devoted, like too many of his station, to the mere pleasures of existence. Generally speaking, I saw very little of him, and his bearing towards me, was always marked with the suavity of a Spaniard, and the kindness of a man who considered himself greatly my debtor.

Although he never read, he possessed a very fine library, to which he permitted my free access.

One afternoon towards the hour of dinner, I was disturbed in the perusal of some book of knight errantry, by his suddenly passing through the room, to his own private chamber, which adjoined.

His looks were horrible, and like those of a man, to whose eyes, the other world had suddenly and supernaturally revealed some awful scene of terror. Slamming the doors behind him, I heard him lock himself up from all access, and commence pacing up and down with the quick stride of passion or despair. Suddenly he would pause—a low murmur—a sob, would be heard,—then a stride—a halt—a string of smothered curses and imprecations—and then the stride renewed.

Thinking that he had sustained some more than ordinary loss at play, I put up my book, and hurried towards the door. On my way, however, I could not help hearing one word pronounced, and repeated with dreadful emphasis, which gave me a true idea of his present cause of anguish, though it could not reveal it.

“At any rate,” thought I, “there is a lady in the case, and considering that the man is in a scrape, it would be very odd if there were not.”

Seeing, however, that I was only a page, I wished him well out of it; and by way of aiding my wishes, went up to my room and took a nap—for I had dined, though my lord had not.

A tap at my door awakened me—I had slept some

hours—Don Julio himself stood before me, pale—deadly pale—but such a look of fury in his eye as almost threw me off my guard.

“Deliver that in person with all speed—and knock at my room-door with the answer,” said he, putting a note into my hands.

Without another word he left me—thankful as Priam for the body of his son. I looked at the superscription; it was for a noted cavalier on terms of the greatest intimacy with the family—with whom, indeed, he had been supping only the night before.

Hastening off to his apartments, I was admitted on my urgent request to his presence. He was sitting before his glass, *en déshabille*; one leg carelessly thrown over the other, looking at himself in the glass, while his valet dressed his hair.

Don Julio's note only seemed to contain three lines. These he read with just the slightest perceptible elevation of his eyebrows. “Oh, very well, child,” said he, “I had hoped 'twas another amusement—but, with all my heart—Ambrose, you hurt my head. But stay! now I think of it, my little man, tell your master I must be rather earlier than the hour he names, for I have to go to the masque to-night at twelve; but I will be out from the play soon after eleven, if that will suit him equally well.”

Saying which, he crumpled up the billet, threw it from him, and turned to the study of his own image as before.

Entering Don Julio's closet, I found him reading, and delivered my message.

“That will do,” he replied, without looking up.

“I have been deceived; there is less mischief brewing than I imagined,” thought I, about to retire with my suspicions perfectly allayed. In the very act of closing the door, my eye glanced upon two rapiers, which had evidently been taken from their usual place of repose, and laid on a chair.

“Those were not for show,” was my soliloquy; and determined to be better informed, I watched the hour of Don Julio's going out, and followed him.

CHAPTER X.

Which shows that in Spain there are more ways than one of trussing a game cock.

It was a night such as I have often seen in Spain—even a remembrance of which I cannot recall without emotion. The lovely moon seemed to shed down all the light of day without its glare.

With what feelings did I steal through that superb city, all seemingly so dead and breathless! save when I occasionally stumbled on a few gay revellers, or when the passing breeze, sweet with blossom of the orange, bore on its wings the distant tinkle of the love-inspiring serenade.

The city clocks tolled out the hour as we past the suburbs, and soon turning to the left on a small enclosure, Don Julio paused beneath the shadow of an old cork tree—I measuring my length on the ground, behind the remains of a stone wall.

We had not long to wait. A solitary figure, in a cloak, appearing from towards the town, Don Julio advanced from his retreat, and the two cavaliers met in the centre of the ground, without a word. Having approached so near that they could recognise each other's faces, each drew back a step, and in the next instant their unsheathed rapiers were gleaming in the moonlight.

I confess it was a horrible sensation, that of witnessing this silent and mysterious meeting between two men, who, when I had last seen them together but a few hours since, were engaged in all the sacred offices of hospitality, now they stood before me actuated by a mutual and most deadly sentiment of destruction—and wherefore?

To both belonged the character of being expert in all the usages of the sword. For some moments the contest continued without a sound or any seeming advantage on either side, although I imagined I could perceive the passage of one or two telling thrusts.

Suddenly, Don Julio gave a lunge—his adversary's sword became locked in the parry—his heel slipped—

and down he fell, the foot of Romarina was planted on his breast.

"My life is at your mercy!" said the prostrate cavalier, uttering the first word.

Don Julio replied not, but I observed his sword trembling as he gazed down upon his enemy, then slowly, and with terrible emphasis, he said, "Speak but those words again!"

"Romarina, I repeat, my life is at your mercy!—I am aware of your victory. It is beneath my honour to disown it."

"Ha! ha!" shrieked, rather than laughed, Don Julio, slowly bringing down the point of his sword, until it touched the breast of his opponent, just above the heart.

"You will not murder me?" said the prostrate man, in a touching accent, "what have I ever done to you?"

"What?" demanded Romarina, "is there nothing?—Nothing under the sacred shelter of friendship and hospitality, with which you can charge yourself?"

Another pause ensued, and then I saw the elbow of Romarina move, as he urged his sword forward with a deliberate thrust—through and through his antagonist.

A stifled groan came borne to my ear on the night breeze, and spoke of the finale of this bloody scene. The blow was twice repeated. The survivor stooped, and wiped his gory weapon in the cloak of his late enemy. He then returned it to its sheath, gazed for an instant on the dead man's face, uttered an expression of contempt as he kicked the carcass, and folding his mantle round his bosom, strode back towards the city.

Between wonder and horror I was petrified. Stealing from my concealment as soon as I dared, I approached the unhappy cavalier, to see if any succour could avail him. However, he was flooded in a puddle of his own blood, without a spark of life remaining.

And is this all, thought I, of that fine fellow I have seen so caressed by the beauties of Seville—of him who expected but a few minutes hence to be figuring in the gaieties of a masque?—little did I guess the tale that lurked behind!

Finding I could be of no use, and fearful of getting stained by his blood, I flew, rather than walked, and scarcely knew where I was, till I found myself once more in my own room. I had often heard of Spanish duels, but I knew not what to make of this. The mystery that attended it seemed beyond any unravelling of mine.

The next morning the whole city was ringing with the murder of the cavalier. Several were accused, but suspicion soon rested on the right party. That party, however, being one of the most influential men in the place, and the slaughtered man being only a Portuguese nobleman, of no very great family or fortune, suspicion, with her usual prudence, thought it wise, if not to hold her tongue, at least to change her note.

She now said, that little was known of the Portuguese beyond the fact that yesterday he was a handsome man, and to-day he was a dead one—a material point,—that he was only noted as a gay fellow, fond of cards and pleasure, and that consequently he was an adventurer, and therefore *must* have been in the wrong.

To prove the closeness of which reasoning she said, it was only necessary for her to add, that he possessed no partisans. There she was in the right. Don Julio retired to a country seat, as it was said, a little indisposed.

In two days the hubbub subsided, and the fame of the diseased noble grew as cold as his body. In this conjuncture, his valet undertook the duty of pilfering, and his creditors had the satisfaction of burying him; and that was all the worthy public cared to know about the matter. A few there were who inquired as to the cause of the quarrel,—some said cards,—some said the sex,—for the deceased was noted as a man of *bonnes fortunes*. I was the wisest; I said nothing.

Four days after the duel, my mistress received an order to hasten to her lord, who was very unwell at his country-seat, some few miles from Seville, and to bring with her Donna Lucia. I was included in the retinue; and at nightfall we arrived at a beautiful villa, or, I should rather say, castle, for such it once had been.

Since the late unhappy affair a general gloom had hung over the whole house. My mistress, though not usually given to weeping, now lamented the event with unceasing tears and groans; she shut herself up and would see no one—not even me. Such was the worthy woman's deep devotion to her husband—for which I had never given her proper credit until now.

Donna Lucia too, secluded herself, and thought on the matter with a gravity—I might almost say a remorse, that reflected the highest credit on her filial affections. Touched with such a charming discharge of her duties, my jealousies insensibly evaporated, and my love returned.

But with the other virtues which she seemed thus suddenly to have adopted, there was one also of prudence, which I cannot say was so much to my liking. This for some days seemed to dictate her conduct towards me.

On the third day, however, after our arrival, Don Julio, whose uneasiness of mind appeared to grow rather worse than better, either discovered or pretended to discover that his wife was very ill. To ensure his being right in his opinion, he sent for a surgeon and had her bled to fainting; thus—and very properly—placing the matter beyond all doubt.

A bed was now made up for Donna Lucia in her mother's chamber, that she might be ready to assist her parent at a moment's notice; for since the night precedent to the duel, Don Julio had, both here and at Seville, confined himself entirely to his own suite of rooms.

I know not why, yet, with all her anxiety to discharge her duty, the kind Lucia seemed much overwhelmed at this determination. Her dejection was not only unusual, but excessive, and I no sooner saw the tear upon her cheek than I felt it on my own. All our fondness returned; the warmer for its interruption.

She asked me to assist her in the task of watching, and I agreed to comply with the request. One o'clock had just sounded; the household were at rest; every thing was still. Quietly entering the sick chamber by a private communication, I looked around. The night-lamp had been ill supplied, and its dying light just enabled me to see that Donna Lucia had retired to rest as well as her mother. Both were breathing with a long but a heavy respiration.

Don Julio had been complaining of rheumatism, and had procured every crevice admitting air to be closed up,—the doors to be luted, and the windows to be fastened. The room felt hot and oppressive—my heart seemed sinking to the bottom of my bosom—something appeared to clog its labouring pulse.

Suddenly I heard a sound;—could it have been a footstep?—if so it was evidently one unwilling to be heard. Another,—they approached. Gliding noiselessly up to Donna Lucia's couch, I concealed myself behind the folds of its drapery. The door opposite opened—a dull glow of light was seen, and the figure of a man stooping to the ground.

Slowly and with care, the intruder lifted a large bra-

zier of glowing charcoal, which he seemed with difficulty to carry into the middle of the room. This done, he raised his person; as if to recover from the effects of the exertion,—passed his hand across his brow, and bent his head gradually down upon his breast—evidently heaving with the convulsion of some strong struggle of the passions.

Suddenly lifting himself into an attitude of determination, and waving his hand behind him, as if to put down some phantom of the mind, the glowing light distinctly fell upon his features. Distorted as they were by fury and remorse, I knew them at a glance. Judge of my horror and dismay when I saw it was Don Julio. So violently did my knees tremble, that I thought I should have fallen.

Listening with outstretched form for a few seconds, as if to hear the breathing of his wife,—he advanced a step towards her side—then seemed involuntarily to start back with all the loathing and horror one would exhibit at an asp. He then turned towards his daughter;—but the pause seemed longer and the hate less determined.

Clasping his hands upon his face, and bending the latter down once more, and rocking his body to and fro, an irrepressible sob of agony broke from him as he made towards the door. As he put out his arm to open this, he turned behind and cast a look at his child's bed,—some relenting angel seemed to guide his steps, and he advanced a pace.

My heart stood still,—every thing grew indistinct, before me. In another instant he had faced about; I could just perceive him once more wave his hand behind him as his person vanished. The door closed; the springing of a lock was heard, and he had gone for ever!

Once more I felt that I might breathe. What had I seen? Did I believe it? What was I to infer? My first impression was a doubt of the sanity of Romarina. For what purpose was this dumb show enacted? Why on such an errand should he thus come into the apartment of his wife and daughter. Too quickly the truth seemed to flash upon me. Going back to the door by which I had entered, I found it fastened from without!

"Every thing is discovered!" said I internally. "It is thus then, and by the cruel pangs of suffocation, that Don Julio dooms us to perish!"

My last hope was in the determination of Donna Lu-

cia;—after the specimen I had seen of Romarina's unrelenting hate, I could no longer hope by myself to frustrate his design of vengeance. Going up to the daughter's pillow, I attempted to awake her.

Whatever were my feelings before, they were nothing to those which overcame me on finding that I was already too late. The poor girl was in a perfect state of insensibility; her pulse was dull and laboured, and every attempt at rousing her proved vain.

I was not then sufficiently acquainted with medicine to come to any decided opinion; but I felt convinced that she was poisoned! The discovery made me frantic, I flew to the side of Donna Lorenza;—but there life was even at a lower ebb.

With the deadly power of charcoal I was well acquainted, but there had been no time for it to produce such effects; these must have been anticipated by some drug.

What should I do? Sense seemed almost to desert me. In vain I tried to exert my reasoning faculties, and returning to poor Lucia, I sank down beside her in despair.

Could my presence in the chamber have been known to Don Julio? If so, why should such a man scruple to use the poniard?—For what could the charcoal have been introduced—either for my destruction or as a cloak to the murders which had evidently been committed.—And should I remain and resign myself to so horrible an end.

Despair restored the energy it had at first beat down. Finding that my young mistress was gone beyond recall, I determined to strive for life at least. Having opened the windows with much difficulty, I tore some of the linen into strips and knotting it with haste, adopted the only chance left to me.

What would I not have given to have rescued at least one of the victims of this sad and dark revenge! But it was impossible.—If I alarmed the household—the first to enter would be Romarina, and I was too well acquainted with the discipline of his family, to dream that one of them would dare to lift a finger in defence of his relatives, if he willed that they should perish.

The struggle of parting thus with Lucia, was terrible: much as I had to resent at her hands. All her good qualities, and they were many, now came thronging back to my remembrance with a suffocating emotion. Again

and again I threw myself upon her almost lifeless person, and bedewed those lovely lineaments with my tears. But Death's embrace had rendered her insensible to the caress of one who would willingly have given his life to preserve hers.

Tearing myself away with a heart ready to break, I committed myself to my linen rope, and having gained the ground, took to my faltering feet, wild with grief and apprehension, and remorse.

CHAPTER XI.

Shows the propriety of escaping from a good thing as well as seeking it.

IN the first hurry of my flight, I began to direct my steps back towards Seville, but soon thinking that inevitable destruction must await me there, I turned about and made at once as near as I could guess for Cadiz, betwixt which and Seville was situated the castle of Romarina. Now bewailing my evil destiny—now solely blaming, and with justice, the unbridled violence of my own passions—and now lamenting with the most intense anguish, the untimely murder of so lovely and so accomplished a woman.

Overcome at length with the bitterness of my feelings, I flung myself down on a bank, almost indifferent as to what became of me. After the relief of a fit of tears, the past and the future presented themselves, and I began to consider what I should do.

Had I followed the inclinations of my heart, I should have lingered in the neighbourhood of the castle, until I could learn something as to the fate of its late inhabitants.

But I reflected that if I were right in my conjectures, any attempt at flight would be in vain; and, indeed, from the character of Romarina, there was very little chance of my feeling myself safe any where in Spain; whereas if I went on to Cadiz, and prepared to embark, it was but to desist from my intention on learning the injustice of my suspicions.

As to returning to the household of Don Julio, let things go how they might, that I abandoned for ever. With regard to funds, I had come away but poorly provided with money, it is true, but I had valuables to a large extent about me. Donna Lucia was generosity itself, and she had heaped upon me presents of very great amount.

These were chiefly gems and trinkets, and with a feeling peculiar to the love of boyhood, I had carefully stored them in a little purse of her presenting, and worn it round my neck.

The next cause of alarm was the gaudy nature of my dress. This I determined to change at daylight with the first peasant boy I could meet; and putting my resolve into execution, I had in a few days the melancholy satisfaction of arriving at Cadiz without any interruption worth mentioning.

I now lost not an hour in finding my way to the English consulate; and presenting myself to our resident under my own name, desired he would assist me in getting back to England.

At first my identity was doubted; this being believed, the consul very kindly welcomed me to his house, and the better to refit my wardrobe advanced me some money—for the presents of Donna Lucia had now become sacred in my eyes, to say nothing of the suspicions that might have been excited had I offered any of them for sale.

As I did not consider myself exactly in a court of justice I did not scruple to observe a few mental reservations in the account I delivered of my wanderings—more especially suppressing all mention of Seville. I could not see, however, that any reason existed for concealing my anxiety to get away, and was delighted that a vessel bound for England was to depart within three or four days. In this bottom was now to be embarked that precious freight, Master Wortley Montague.

Knowing that if any thing was to be learnt in Cadiz respecting Romarina, that the consul would be the likeliest source of information, I asked casually as to the truth of some reports which I heard respecting an asserted murder. The consul, as I expected, had heard some exaggerated statement, but was quite unable to unravel the mystery of Romarina's motives—though with the rest of the world, he imputed them to some accidental family disclosures.

I know not whether I am an exception on this point to

the generality of mankind, but the shade in which these scenes were obscured made them doubly frightful, and it was not until some days after I had embarked, and was fairly crossing the bay of Biscay, that I could believe myself safe.

A tedious passage somewhat delayed our arrival in England, and touching at Falmouth, I disembarked, and proceeded direct to town. I did not fail to congratulate myself on once more arriving under the protection of our happy laws, but my joys were all dashed with the bitterness of my remembrances.

Well, thought I, as we approached London, I have not quite realized the views with which I set out from Westminster;—but all in good time!

Alas! what different creatures does not experience leave us! I was then too young to read aright the lessons I had already received. But so it is. The young fly heedlessly at the gratification of the affections; but it seems to be an immutable law of nature, that the paths of such enjoyments shall be beset with thorns, which, though they fail to lacerate at the moment, still leave a sting behind them, under which we often writhe for years.

BOOK THE SECOND:

CONTAINS THE IMPORTANT EPOCH OF MY HOBBADEHOYISM.



CHAPTER XII.

Treats of my return home, together with my father, mother, and fat butler.

AFTER so long an absence of such a son, my modesty bids me leave the style of my reception to the imagination of the reader.

The morning after my arrival, my father's unwieldy old butler, had the impudence to compare me to the prodigal son, adding, that joy for my return had like almost to have killed him.

"I wish to St. Chrysostom it had, master Thomas," was my reply, "for I see no reason why the fatted calf should not be slain for me as well as my original."

However, as joys are of infinitely shorter duration than evils, the ecstasies so natural in gaining such a treasure were quickly over, and my father as usual began to amuse himself and plague me, by insisting on the necessity of a private tutor to recover what I had lost. In vain I begged him not to be distressed—in vain I assured him I had lost nothing. "Consider, my dear sir," said I, "how could it be so—I had nothing to lose."

But I soon discovered that if I lost nothing else, I lost my labour. A tutor was found; and I consigned to his care. I piously made up my mind under these circumstances to learn nothing, and at the end of some time, was considerably mortified to find that I had insensibly imbibed much more of the *vim doctrinam* than I had ever intended.

I really know not how it happened; I am sure I took

the greatest of pains to fortify my mind against the approaches of the enemy, by entering most readily into every species of genteel dissipation which the British metropolis affords; but I suppose these proved too few to counteract the inherent propensities of my nature.

My native bashfulness was soon therefore distressed by perceiving that I was held to have made good progress in "my studies." To add to my annoyance, even my very father considered me a youth of parts, and therefore quite his own child of course.

Seeing under these circumstances that my education was likely to prove a ruinous affair, I resolved once more to renew my original intentions in commencing life, and for this purpose formed a grand and, vanity apart, I may say, a very superior project of my own. This I communicated to Lady Mary, one morning, at her breakfast table, when we were sitting *tête-à-tête*. I am not usually in the habit of committing such an extravagance as to ask my mother's advice, but pursued this course at present, simply, with the benevolent design of relieving her ladyship from a terrible "fit of yawning" that had seized upon her.

As I very wisely prefaced my proposal with an assertion of its excellence, she, of course, expressed the greatest curiosity to hear it. The first sentence was only half out of my mouth, however, before she rose, and running to a side table, began to write, as if she had only waited till her attention was demanded by me, in order to employ it wholly on herself. Had she risen with a fit of the *cacoëthes* instead of the vapours, she could not have been more eager.

By St. Paul, thought I, how I do detest your literary people; their proceedings are so outré—they never can go on like ordinary mortals. To a plain common sense, every-day-going gentleman, like myself, it is perfectly disgusting.

"Well, my lady," said I, going on with my proposal, "I think—so and so, and so and so."

"Yes, Edward," replied she.

"Well, and then I propose to do this."

"Exactly."

"And then I intend to avoid that."

"Ay, and very proper."

"And what's more, you see, this is this, and nothing else."

"Well, so I have always thought, Edward."

"Well, then, the results being such and such, you perceive that I am right."

"Precisely so."

"Then, what do you think of it, my lady?"

No reply;—scribble—scribble. The deuce take it, thought I—but I will not lose my temper—No, no—and seizing the poker, I thrust it so violently into the fire as to make a burning coal fly out.

The perfume of that may do your ladyship good, thought I, though it does not improve the carpet, and so I let it burn a hole fairly through the web.

"Bless me, what a smell," said she without looking up—"Edward, were you telling me any thing just now?"

"Nothing, except that the moon is made of green cheese, and"—poking the fire most violently,—"*I only wish with all my soul you were there to enjoy it,*"—a pause.

Rising at length—"Why, Edward, what nonsense were you saying? See—I have been trying an English version of that Spanish ballad you sang to me yesterday—what say you to it? That Spanish word in the last line—is the accent rightly put on?"

"Put on, madam," replied I, and without looking at her verses; "had you told your servant this morning to put you on a clean frill about your neck, it would have been vastly more to your credit."

This by the way came with infinite grace from a gentleman of my circumspection; but Lady Mary was not of my opinion. I saw at a glance she was going to "reply severely."

"Mr. Montague," began her ladyship, "I forgive your impertinent rudeness when I reflect on the loose habits of your late companions, but"—

"Habits, madam," cutting her short, "I beg no abuse of my garments, they are the best that my tailor can afford me; and talking of habits, permit me to say, that no man's habits can be so loose as the women's."

She knew not whether to frown or laugh; but it was a kind heart with all its vagaries.

"Edward," patting my cheek, "thou art an oddity."

"Surely, my dear mother, you must mistake," I replied, kissing her forehead, "or at any rate, you should have thought of the great probability of that, when you were to be married."

Having read her verses, and found them pretty tolerably incomprehensible, I said, of course, that they were vastly fine; and to make up for my "impertinence," assured her it was no wonder the wicked little wasp of Twickenham was jealous, for I had never seen any thing of his to compare with them; and, for the matter of that, never was truer word spoken.

"Edward," said Lady Mary, in the evening, "here is a cheque for fifty guineas, your tutor says you're making great progress." Unluckily for her ladyship my tutor had been out of town for a week; but then, in his absence, thought I, I have learnt the art of criticism.

"Now, said I, as I came out of the banker's the following morning, I am just worth a hundred and twenty guineas, and not above three times that amount in debt. This for Wortley Montague is pretty fair. So it seems, I have gone on lately with astonishing propriety. There cannot be a doubt that I am entitled to a little innocent recreation; but my education, said I, is that which concerns me. It certainly would be desirable that I should be, as elderly ladies say, "a superior young man." And the present system is so horrible—full of faults.

It would be a great boon to society to show them what an education ought to be. Fathers are not the people—no, no—they don't understand it. Neither is London the place—by no means. Well, as my money's in my pocket, why should I not start at once?—Where?—No matter where!

But my letters and papers lying about unlocked. They can only be read, and divulging a man's secrets often saves him a deal of trouble—since nothing is more difficult than to keep them. Then for clothes—a minor consideration while such obliging gentlemen reside in Monmouth Street—good. But I must write a letter to my dear father? Without a doubt! If there is a pest to society, it is an undutiful child. Going into a coffee-house, I called for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the letter which will be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

Displays some new qualifications for a servant, and how Jeremy, surnamed "the honest," is enlisted into my service.

London.

MY DEAR FATHER,

HAVING little wit, and less money, I am going to study the sciences. When the first is replenished and the second exhausted, you shall have a fine account of the third.

As I leave town a little in debt, I should wish, if possible, to relieve your expenses.

Perhaps, therefore, you will allow me, sir, to suggest the dismissal of my tutor, and the addition of his salary to the amount of my allowance.

Will you present my very dutiful love to my mother, and believe me ever your most obedient and affectionate son,

EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGUE.

"And a very dutiful, obedient, and respectful letter," said I, as a special messenger took it off for delivery.

Taking up a paper to see what vessels were advertised to sail for foreign parts, I put it in my pocket, paid for the use of the coffee-house, and walked out to consider where I should go next.

Wander where I may, thought I, the first thing required by a gentleman of my extended property, is a servant. What a paragon will I not choose! No ordinary rules shall be servilely followed for the guidance of my choice.

"Honoured sir!" said a beggar at this instant, "if your worship would discharge your duty towards God and man, you would relieve an unhappy gentleman whom heaven has been pleased to afflict with a large wife and seven small children."

"My good fellow, I like your voice," replied I, quickly turning round.

"Well, thank you, sir, for saying so," returned he, "for it's '*vox et præterea nihil*' with me, I can assure your worship!"

"Why, how is this, sir—a scholar, and in such a plight?"

"No less, your worship; but I'm like yourself, I've been in better and in worse before now."

"Very likely; but pray, my friend, what are you?"

"That's a hard question! but 'tis no sort of use to deceive you—to speak plain truth then, sir, I'm a rogue."

"Why, faith, but thou'rt inclined to wag it with me!"

"Not I, your worship, but my tongue is."

"But what is it you want?"

"Every thing, sir—and a happy fellow I am."

"How so?"

"Why, your worship sees I never can want more."

"True enough! and for what may you be fitted, pray?"

"Any thing, sir; and 'tis that has been the ruin of me."

"Explain yourself."

"Clearly enough, respected sir, 'tis a universal aptitude of genius has made me 'every thing by turns, and nothing long.'"

"Well, well, if that's the case, you may be likely to suit some little views of mine."

"The less they are the better, sir."

"Ay, ay! well then, my good fellow, I'm in want of a servant!"

"Ay, truly, sir!—if it had been a master, you could have been much more easily accommodated."

"So I suppose! But, hark'ye, I want an ugly ill-favoured, worse-looking rascal. Just answer satisfactorily one or two questions, and you'll suit me to a nicety; for if I may judge by your countenance——"

"Excuse me, sir, for interrupting you, but perhaps your worship will allow me to observe, that really for a modest man to hear his own praise——"

"Ay, ay, I understand—well, then, to the point; answer me these questions properly and we're agreed. First, Can you lie upon an occasion? Next, Can you steal at all times? Third, Can you be honest upon an emergency? Fourth, Can you make yourself generally useful?"

"Ahem!" said my new friend, with a smile of singular meaning—"To a man of doubtful principles these little inquiries of yours, sir, might prove embarrassing. But to be candid with you, sir, as to lying, 'tis an accomplishment I've practised all my life, and I hardly know—though I speak this with extreme diffidence—whether I could be beaten at it, even by yourself. With respect to thieving, though I say, that shouldn't say it, I may almost boast the same. I firmly believe you'll scarcely find a better

hand in all England. Then again, sir, to prove that I can be honest upon an occasion, allow me to return you this silver snuff-box, which I borrowed from your pocket, a few minutes since, as well for a pinch, as for a general warranty that your acquaintance would not be without some benefit to me. While, for being generally useful——”

“Hold, my good friend, so dexterous a gentleman can scarcely fail to be that!” said I, interrupting him, and receiving back my property. “I see we understand each other, and consider we are master and man henceforward. For board and clothing, I undertake to see to your comforts; and, with regard to wages, suppose, to keep our intellects from fading, I allow you just as much as you can steal from me every week.”

“With all my heart; your worship; no man who’s industrious can ever come to want.”

“Very likely; but remember, you shall promise me three things, on the honour of a thief:—You shall never play the rogue, except with my permission; you shall always give me a week’s notice before you run away from me; and render every month a due account of all you have purloined.”

“On the honour of a thief, sir, I promise it you; and now, if your worship’s bound for the world’s end, I’m your humble follower.”

“Very good!—pray, my friend, how may you be called—what’s your name?”

“Jeremy, surnamed The Honest, may it please you, sir.”

“Well, then, honest Mr. Jeremy, you seem to have forgotten your large wife and small family. Pray how did you get them?”

“On purpose for your worship; and since we have agreed, permit me to say, I’ve disposed of them as I obtained them—that is, for the occasion.”

“And a very prudent husband, Mr. Jeremy; but suppose, as your dress is none of the brightest, that we step into the first tavern, and send for one of those walking warehouses, the Jews.”

“My thanks to you, sir; a few doors farther on we have the sign of the Pipe and Punch Bowl, where, as I know the liquor to be good, I shall be most happy to drink a long life to your worship, and a short fit to your humble servant.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Contains part of the life and adventures of Jeremy, surnamed "the Honest."

A REQUEST so modest as that concluding the last chapter, I could not find it in my heart to refuse. Stepping into the tavern recommended, I called for a bottle of wine, and sent off the porter to the neighbouring and fashionable depôt of genteel wardrobes—Monmouth Street,—desiring Jeremy to entertain me with his history while we waited for the Israelite.

"Sir," said my new servant, "I do not know that I have much to lay before you, but if I am not amusing I shall at least be obedient. May I ask if there's any county in particular in which your worship would like me to be born."

"Yes, sirrah, the true one. This is an emergency."

"Ah then, sir, I understand I'm to be honest. Since that's the case, I must inform you that I first saw the light in hilly Devonshire, noted, as your worship knows, for having produced many other illustrious characters,—my father was a respectable follower of a much-abused calling: in good phrase, a pursuer of the black art; in other words, a travelling tinker."

"Or, I suppose, in plain English, a most determined thief."

"Of course, your worship; that, like the Latin noun in established cases, was a thing to be understood. My mother was a lady of classical descent, who wandering with other younger branches of her house, from their principality on the Nile, reared me, her only son, among the flesh-pots of Egypt."

"Wait, Mr. Jeremy; suppose now you translate your oriental figures, for the accommodation of a less learned listener."

"Certainly, honoured sir, it is but a false pride that cannot occasionally lower itself to any capacity. I only mean, sir, that I am the son of a gipsy, brought up to the duties of a scullion, and"——

"The inheritance of the gallows, I presume."

"Held your worship, or shall I think you born as the executor to that trust, and Jupiter forbid that I should

ever show any greediness for such a pendent bounty; I was, as I have said, brought up a scullion, and for many years of my childhood, a large three-legged iron pot was my charge, and the wilds of Dartmoor my play-ground. I trust I need not add, sir, I never lost an opportunity of straying on the one and neglecting the other, until having given my worthy parents burnt soup once too often, they treated me so harshly that I set off without their leave to cultivate at large the world's acquaintance.

"My first introduction was into the pocket of an elderly gentleman, near the town of Dartmouth. This procured me a fine leathern pocket-book, five guineas, a large quantity of household bills, all duly paid, a very fine recipe for making caudle, and a few letters.

"Not being then able to read, and always having a great deal of charity in my disposition, I contented myself with the money, and left the rest of my booty on the field of battle. Thinking I had got hold of a fortune never to be exhausted, I would not trust myself to change any of my money at the town near to which I had so fairly come by it, but at once pushed on for Exeter.

"On the next day I was overtaken by a poor Scotch peddler, who having picked up the shell without the oyster, and being a more literate body than myself, gave me the table of contents. To my no small amusement, he also informed me of the existence of a memorandum to this effect—I, James Elton, being advised that I may some day suddenly drop down dead of apoplexy, have provided five guineas, in the left pocket of this pouch, that any charitable person, to whom this book comes under such disastrous circumstances, may therewith see me decently interred."

"And will you not return the poor man his property, Mr. Macnaghten?" said I.

"Na, na, man," replied the peddler, 'as the money's clean gane, it's as weel to suppose the respectit gentleman is dead and buried—God assoilzie him. To be sure the bills duly paid and receipted 'll no be worth much, I'm thinking—though the caudle will doubtless be very fine for the gude wife at hame. As for the epistles of the said deceased Mr. Elton, I hold them to contain a power o' grace and learning.'

"Wishing him much joy of his bargain, I pushed on, sir, and said nothing. Having arrived at Exeter, I hung out at the Merry Fiddler, on Fore Street Hill, soon got

acquainted with a merry set of blades, and while my money lasted, led as happy a life as any honest gentleman need.

"Happening, however, one Sunday evening, to be rowing on the river Exe, with some mercers' apprentices, who were taking leave to speculate with their masters' money, our boat upset, off a pretty sort of drying green, called the Bunney, and in about five minutes as many young linen-drapers went to re-enforce the counters of the shades below.

"Not being sufficiently handsome, as your worship perceives, for the water nymphs to take a liking to me, I was dragged ashore, more dead than alive, at the feet of the reverend Mr. Singsong, a worthy canon of the cathedral, then and there walking with his wife and family.

"When the portly ecclesiastic first beheld me, he doubted whether it was to the land or water that such an amphibious animal might properly belong. So far indeed had these charitable doubts worked upon his humane feelings, that he hesitated whether I should be thrown back into the latter, or left to lie on the former.

"But his wife very kindly asserting that I was one of those wicked, good for nothing boys, who, being on the high road to perdition afforded, admirable cases of reclamation to good Samaritans, the softer rhetoric of my lady prevailed.

"'John,' said the dignitary, turning to his fat footman, 'see to where they take the creature, and here is six pence. Let him want for nothing.'

"However, honoured sir, not to fatigue you with the many minor charities of my new and munificent protector, I was taken to a neighbouring public house, where, being seized with a fever, the curate of the parish, who supported five children on sixty pounds a year, removed me to his own home, and had me carefully tended until my convalescence.

"Being no longer able to retain me, the dean's wife, who heard that I was well and able to work, and therefore remembered that I was fit to be reformed, sent a servant, to engage me as footboy and knife-cleaner; for even such humble offices in the family of a cathedral dean, form a sufficient purification for such sinners as myself.

"Off I went—I loved the dean's good living—his servants loved my wit,—such humble sort, as it may be,

your worship. I soon found out the character of my master.

"The morning after my admission into the family, I was waiting behind my lady reverence's chair, to hand her the silver tea kettle, as occasion demanded—just as breakfast was finished, and I was thinking what a fine thing it would be, if I could only put the kettle in my pocket, and walk off with it—the boiling water excepted, honoured sir,—just then, I say, his reverence, who had been bloating over butter, honey, eggs, ham, beef, and jelly, for the last hour, broke forth with——

"'Hark, my dear, at this most atrocious case of parochial cruelty. What is it?—let me see. Oh, here!—I have it,' reading from the news, 'Two poor old people, both near seventy or upwards, starved to death, by the brutal insensibility of the overseers.

"'Pon my soul, madam!' as his reverence finished reading the horrid story, and sucked down his last egg, 'pon my soul, 't is enough to make the very tears start into one's eyes. Jeremiah, take away the tea things.'

"'Mr. Stoneland, sir,' said the butler, announcing one of his reverence's private tenants.

"'Ah, Mr. Stoneland! and pray, sir, what's the best news with you, Mr. Stoneland?'

"'Nothing very bright, Mr. Dean, unless it is the new poor's-rate, just clapped on upon us—a shilling in the pound.'

"'New parish-rate, again!' quoth the dean, curse those poor! they'll be the ruin of the land.'

"Good old gentleman! he had a most harmonious twang, and a very favourite text. It was the good Samaritan.

"I've never slept so soundly, may it please your worship, since I lost the benefit of 'sitting under him,' as they of the heterodoxy phrase it; the pews of the cathedral seemed built, honoured sir, for the sermons of the dean."

"Ay, Jeremy, doubtless, and the sermons in turn constructed for the pews,—and query, my honest friend, which were the most rambling?"

"Why, bless your worship! there never was a question on that head. However, sir, my revered master being the possessor of three livings, which, with sundry other preferments, had been forced upon his modesty, he was, you see, obliged to employ a steward. This latter gen-

tleman happening to be persecuted with the same ascetic dislike to ease and good living as his reverence, undertook to instruct me in what he termed the three grand rules of R,—reading, riting, and rithmetic; as he said, out of love for my advancement,—as I guessed, out of affection for his indolence.

“Having always had an innate taste for polished manners and society, I soon proved an apt scholar; and after thus faithfully serving the family for some time, it suddenly struck me that it became my turn to serve myself. I did this the more willingly because I felt myself animated by the warmest sense of gratitude, and thinking the proofs of my proficiency the greatest delight I could afford my instructor, I set to work with a great deal of industry, falsified a few of the minor accounts, and, since my pockets would not admit the silver kettle, walked off one afternoon with fifty pounds instead.

“Some untoward accident discovered to the steward my efforts to please him, on the very eve of their success; whereas your worship sees I had intended my departure, like many other well-intended gratifications, to have come upon him as a nice little surprise.

“The surprise, however, came upon myself, which, you perceive, was so far awkward, that I not only lost the dean’s place, but his money,—which was much worse, as I must confess I had taken a very sincere liking to it.

“Yes, truly, I had proceeded no farther than the little village of Alphington, some three miles off, when I was overtaken and brought back. Fortunately I was rather too deep in the secrets of the family to be prosecuted, so giving me half-a-crown and my old clothes, they turned me adrift; rightly concluding, that a lad of my adroitness could scarcely fail, at the worst, to come by something.”

“Even if it was to be a halter, Mr. Jeremy.”

“Thank your worship; after such a kind idea you scarcely could do less than fit it for me. However, sir, though somewhat disheartened, I was not cast down. I had some thoughts of applying to the worthy curate who had cared for me in my illness; but knowing him to be an honest man in reality, I did not conceive I was at liberty to prey on any but my own species, for after all; your worship, cynical as one may feel towards society in general, still, a good man struggling with *advertisements*, as a blundering friend of mine would say, is a sight worthy of the gods.

"As for the fat dean, had I fleeced fifty of them, so much the better. To make matters infinitely worse, your worship, there was a poor, sweet, pretty cherub of a girl in his reverence's nursery, not above eighteen, who helped to look after the children, and whom I had had the misery of ruining. Our secret was discovered soon after I decamped, and she lost her place as well as myself. Her parents also refused to have any thing to say to her, and she was thrown upon the world without another stay on earth beside myself.

"To shut the door of mercy on the wretch surprised by guilt, is to give a pressed recruit to infamy, when repentance might otherwise have gained a volunteer. My heart aches still, sir, when I think this was the case with poor Emma, and I may add, with sorrow, 'twas my case too.

"If I ever could have turned to honesty, it would have been for her sake. I made the effort and with sincerity, but it was in vain,—my disgrace was too well known. I sought for confidence, and was repulsed with scorn and distrust; in pride and rage I took once more to light-fingered ways and light-fingered companions, but not till I knew to my cost, that he who neglects to earn an honest character when within his reach, is only as much worse than the ignorant blockhead who destroys a bank-note because he cannot read it, as the villain is worse than the fool.

"As for Emma, sir, I was madly fond of her, and so at first was she of me. I let her want for nothing I could procure her; and risks and dangers, and tricks beyond number I put in practice to get whatever money we wanted.

"Had there been any means of our gaining an honest livelihood, I would have married her with all my heart, and been delighted to do so; but that, under our circumstances, would have been madness. I was very happy, and yet very wretched; if your worship can make that out. Our acquaintance had not commenced in a manner to warrant such an expectation; but I never felt so much remorse in all my days as while I knew her,—nor ever said a prayer in my life till the day she was about to be confined!

"I felt the worth of virtue, though I dared not hope to own it; and yet, sir, I had never dreamt of such a thing before; but God, in mercy, has given us the affec-

tions of the heart, to nurse up to maturity, those infant virtues, which otherwise would be born but to die within us.

"I might yet have been something good, but Heaven revealed to me those perceptions of good, only more bitterly to punish the evil I had committed. The influence of corrupt society will insensibly make a victim even of one most formed to abhor it. I could not prevent some of my companions from coming occasionally about me, and as Emma grew better, she felt her loneliness more irksome. Her child had lived but a few hours. She was a soft, sanguine, kind-hearted creature, and beautiful;—but, however, it is idle to recall her image. Every one around her was worse than herself; she could not raise them to her thoughts, and so she soon fell down to theirs. Being pretty, they naturally tampered with her; and, fond of admiration, she was found a fitted prey.

"I saw what was going to happen, and strove hard to prevent it. The step she had already taken was bad, but it might have been repaired. The next led to irretrievable infamy. I attempted to reason with her, and we had a severe quarrel. I went out in the morning, leaving her at home, and when I returned in the evening she had run off with the veriest smooth-tongued, hard-hearted, selfish scamp I ever knew.

"I had not the consolation to think that she had got even a clever rogue to care for her; no, nor worse, even a sincere one: I saw at a glance she would soon be among the vilest of the vile. I spent that night in weeping; now in rage; now softened to despair. I did not attempt to seek her; the wish alone to leave me, had polluted her for ever in my eyes, and the last, lingering regard for rectitude fled from me with the being within whose warm caress it had first germinated."

Jeremy's voice quavered for an instant,—a single drop surprised his eye, and coursed slowly down his cheek. He did not notice it, however, but, emptying his glass, proceeded:—

"The morning, sir, found me resolved in my purpose; I arose and communicated it to another, a counterpart of myself: we determined to put it into execution forthwith. The assizes were then holding on the castle-hill;—the trial of a gentleman for the murder of his uncle came on in a few hours.

"The case excited great interest in the county, and

the usual attendance to hear the causes was doubled. We had often been in the habit, on similar occasions, of holding gentlemen's horses for them, while they went in and saw what was going on; and we accordingly repaired to the spot.

"Having waited till we got hold of two very fine animals, we quietly walked them down through the busy crowd into the town, and using the narrow lanes, and leaving the city by the parish of St. Sidwells, took to the country as fast as we could go; determined for the future, to try our fortunes as knights of the most honourable order of the road.

"It is thus, respected sir, that gentlemen of our noble profession are promoted. First, a pocket may be picked, and then a lock. Petty larceny paves the way to felony, and deeds of high emprise succeed; until, step by step, we gain that exalted station in the eyes of mankind, where a piece of hemp is bestowed as the cordon of our order, and a woollen cap becomes the crown of our deserts."

As honest Mr. Jeremy said this, he gave an emphatic chuck with his thumb under his left ear; then turning round without the alteration of a muscle,—“Mr. Landlord, another bottle of your best.”

CHAPTER XV.

Which continues, with great edification, the history of Jeremy surnamed “the honest.”

“WELL, your worship,” continued Mr. Jeremy, “I was what vulgar people call a highwayman. In better terms, I had abjured the base and heartless compact of society, and had gone back to the freer institutions of our forefathers, when every man took what he wanted, and gave judgment in equity without the aid of a Lord Chancellor.

“As I considered the wilds and forest of Dartmoor in some degree my own inheritance, we at once made for its fastnesses; here, having looked out a very snug cave as

our retreat, we improved it to the best of our abilities by such humble arts as we possessed, and seeing we were monarchs of a wide if not a fair domain, we made war upon the world in due form.

"It is unknown, sir, the good we did."

"Most true, my honest Jeremy."

"You may smile, your worship, 'tis a fact. Travellers were our peculiar care; the rich of all professions we relieved, and Mercury bear witness how we fed and clothed the poor, the hungry, and the wretched; for, in truth, sir, I and my companion were all of these by turns.

"We did not, however, confine ourselves to our own immediate neighbourhood. Whenever we happened to light upon a richer prey than ordinary, my brother knight and self set out to take a little pleasure in the adjoining counties; on these occasions we dressed up as master and man, taking it by turns to act the last, who was always armed to the teeth, to guard against robbers; a set of people whom we made it a point to mention in no slight terms of fear and disparagement, whenever an opportunity offered.

"Often did we hear our exploits repeated, and embellished with numerous exaggerations, and on the last of these our sallies, as we were returning to our beat after having exhausted our cash, we were overtaken late one afternoon on Salisbury Plain by two good people in the same relations,—that is, a gentleman and his servant.

"We made room for them to pass by, but slackening their pace to ours, the former gently edged himself into my conversation, for I was then the lord. Being in course of our discussions, very properly impressed with a most perfect idea of our respectability, he was a little more communicative than he might otherwise have been. By this means we learnt that he was pushing on to reach his home that night, and was somewhat nervous as to crossing a district so noted as a resort of highwaymen as that in which he then was.

"For this reason he greatly congratulated himself on having joined cavalcade with a person of my condition, your worship, and one who seemed no less determined than formed to make resistance to any attack of those unhallowed wretches—'who,' said I, pointing to the extent of country around us, and the setting sun—'not only endanger property, but pollute some of Nature's fairest scenes.'

"A suitable reply having been made to this, I waited till we had got into a proper spot, and then pretending that I heard a whistle, drew forth a pistol, clapped it to his breast, and telling him I was sure there were thieves in his neighbourhood, begged him to deliver up his property into my safer keeping.

"He was a gentleman, well advanced in years, and from his apprehensions I was pretty well convinced that he would prove no mean booty—my man, John, was not behind his master,—we had our friends stripped to the skin; obtaining as the results of the process—a gold watch, worth nearly eighty guineas, and a very pretty suit of diamonds, which he had purchased, I suppose, in London, and which I afterwards learnt he was carrying home to a newly wedded wife.—For your married men, sir, are always for committing some extravagance.

"Having thus eased these confiding people, we did them the farther favour of starting their horses across the plain, and leaving them tied hand and foot some little distance from the road. Quickly taking to our steeds, we turned away as if towards Salisbury, but thinking it as prudent to avoid that city, we cut across for Hampshire, and made for the metropolis.

"A soaring ambition had long tempted us to come out upon this wider stage, for we modestly, though rightly imagined, that our sphere had hitherto been too petty for our abilities. Not that we intended, your worship, to exercise our calling on the Londoners, at least till our money was gone, or some very safe and tempting opportunity should come across us.

"Our first object was to dispose of our diamonds, for which purpose I took care to make myself duly acquainted with their value and mode of sale, then stripping them of their settings, for the sake of security, sold them as a gentleman who had recently arrived from Turkey, and there purchased the gems at Constantinople, for a sister now dead.

"Disposing of them in three lots, to different merchants, we realized two hundred and seventy guineas for the stones, and commenced gentlemen about town; giving ourselves out as young men recently come into great property in Cornwall.

"As pleasure was our object, I need not remark that we met with various fortune. Several matrimonial engagements were proffered to me, also, but I had not yet forgotten the gentle Emma's treatment of her adorer, and

longed, moreover, to see a little more of the world before I chained myself down.

"Among others of my suitors, was a good woman who called herself a lady of quality. Her chief charms consisted of a never failing rouge pot, a jointure of three hundred a year, and the prettiest knack of cheating at cards, your worship, that I think I ever saw.

"My lady, having rather a pressing necessity for some responsible person, she made her overtures to me: in order to get decently out of this dilemma, I assured her that I would be candid with her—I should have been delighted with the opportunity, but for the unhappy fact that I was already wired—a foolish youthful alliance below my own rank, said I, into which my ignorance of the world had betrayed me, of which I had become much ashamed; and, therefore, allowed the sharer of it a separate maintenance in Devon—a mere hundred and fifty a year, that she might not disgrace me. It was unfortunate, and I was aware how much I deserved commiseration for all I had lost in her ladyship.

"‘So then,’ said she, in a musing and despondent manner, ‘you have already got a spouse?’

"‘Yes, indeed, my lady, I have,’ replied I, ‘and a very disagreeable one.’ ‘Oh, never mind that,’ said she, brightening up.—‘To tell you the truth, I have two myself—but they’ve both gone off to different parts of the world, so that there is little fear that we shall ever be troubled by them.’

"‘Very likely not, madam,’ I returned, scarcely able to keep my gravity, ‘but my spouse is of no such sort as yours seem to have been.—She would not only find us out, but infallibly expose us; on the whole, therefore, I dare not testify my affection in the way your ladyship proposes, although I can with pleasure introduce to your ladyship a very worthy friend, of whose fortune and estate I have the most intimate knowledge.’

"The lady of quality bit at the bait, and in three days I had the happiness of seeing them mutually give and take respectability by the proposed alliance. I had owed a debt to the bridegroom, and was now well satisfied that I very effectually paid both him and his bride in full.

"This desirable event had not taken place long, and the happy couple were still upon their honey-moon tour, when my stay in the beau monde was suddenly and somewhat curiously terminated. Among other little amuse-

ments, I had, as is the wont with gentlemen of fashion, taken very affectionately to gambling.

"At first I had a long run of extreme good luck, which I may honestly say I never lost any opportunity of farthing by such little manipulations as could be decently practised.

"On this revenue, for some time, affairs went smoothly, very smoothly; but high-tide having past, there came slack water, and then the ebb—one night driven to desperation by a severe loss, I so far forgot myself as to draw forth my gold watch, of Salisbury plain acquisition, and laying it down, staked it at a redeeming price of fifty guineas.

"Other tables were in the room, and many strangers, whom it had never occurred to me to scrutinize. I was not a little surprised, therefore, when a hand was suddenly darted down upon my time-piece, and I, on looking up, discovered in the intruder my old fellow-traveller.

"I confess that for a moment I lost my usual coolness, and hardly knew what I said or did, or looked:

"He furiously proclaimed the robbery, I as furiously denied it. As we were in a private house, though in one to which various company were admitted without much scrutiny, our mutual host saw the necessity of preserving the reputation of any of his guests from such a charge, and therefore warmly espoused my side—representing that the watch might have passed through many hands since his losing it.

"The old fellow now swore to my features, and, luckily for me, to the features of some man behind me, as having been my servant. This gentleman was a stranger to me, and my host proved his presence in town at the very time of the robbery.

"The discredit thus flung on the whole story, was the only thing which saved my being given in charge to a constable. As it was, the old fellow stuck soundly to his text. A duel was patched up upon the spot, and I went home to prepare for being called up early on the ensuing morning by my host in the character of my second.

"Taking pity on him, however, honoured sir, for all the trouble I was giving, I packed up the very few valuables I had, and leaving my supernumerary clothes to answer any awkward questions my landlady might have to put to them about her bill, I got my horse out of the stable two hours before the appointed fight, and rode slowly on towards Hounslow.

"Here I knew the haunts of a few adventurous young

spirits of the road, and droll enough to relate, I was stopped on the way by a pair of handy gentlemen to whom, on looking at them a little, I held out—not my pistol, but my hand.

“After a hearty laugh, at such a professional rencontre with my acquaintance, I turned my back for the present on high life, and took to high living. I know not, however, whether it was my good fortune which had deserted me, or whether only my good sense, for I observe in the world that many clever people very often make use of that term when they should express themselves by this. Certainly with me it was either the one or the other, or perhaps both.

“A few days after my joining my new associates, we got intelligence of a very heavy sum of bullion coming down by coach to some country banker, and determined on the hazardous attempt to intercept and capture it. The attack we made most gallantly, but were beaten off—while a large slug from the blunderbuss of the guard passing through my hat, glanced over my head, and I fell senseless in the very act of seizing the horses, preparatory to cutting the traces. At this instant I am told, Mr. Coachman applying the whip most vigorously, both vehicle and horses passed over the body of your humble servant. While I, coming to myself shortly after, had the satisfaction of finding my body bruised from top to toe, and my right leg broken in two places, though fortunately the bone did not come through in either.

“My comrades being thieves, and consequently *de facto et de jure* outcasts from all the honourable usages of society, did *not* leave me on the road, to be apprehended by Death or Mr. Justice, whichever might happen to come by first; on the contrary, tenderly bearing me across the heath, together with another of our party, who had got a slug in his body, we were taken to the hut of the poor fellow’s mother. There a pretty scene awaited us.”

CHAPTER XVI.

Continues the history of Jeremy the Honest, and gives one instance of the many examples, of fortitude under calamity where none are looking on either to applaud or to assist.

"THE old woman under whose care we were now placed," continued Jeremy, "was afflicted with a disease in her limbs which hindered her from being any thing but a burden to herself.

"She had known better days, honoured sir, and the remembrance of past comforts only served to imbitter present misery. How she had come down in the world I never heard. It might have been a touching story—for, poor old lady, 'twas by her tears alone she told the tale."

Jeremy paused an instant, then looking up once more, went on, "A breaking heart, your worship knows, is but a poor concealer of its sufferings, however it may hide its sorrows. The old woman had but one hope on earth—that was her son.

"She had brought him up, she used to say, in that old sheelding on the common, and while her strength remained, had got her living by washing 'for her neighbours, and the few stray alms she might obtain. She had then got him out to service, and he being a good lad, had shared his wages with her.

"But the rich little know the responsibilities that surround them, or how soon a heedless act may lead to the ruin of a fellow-creature. If it were not so, sir, they would not think themselves possessors of their wealth, but merely God's good stewards of it.

"The lad's master was a warm-hearted man as ever breathed; but he never chose to put the least control upon his passion. Being accustomed in his rages to kick and cuff whoever came in his way, he tried this on with young Harry Finchley; but the lad never having been brought up properly by a *town* education, you see, sir, instead of contenting himself with a little daily pilfering, as any proper notioned London footman would have done, behaved like a regular downright John Bull—in other words, your worship, he knocked his master down.

"This act at once drove him on the world—he could get no character; his mother was dependent on him, and he could not see her starve. First, he turned poacher; then, taking the next steps in his degree, as bad led on to worse, he joined the polished set in which we met.

"A fine handsome noble-hearted lad he was—though what *I* should have called a little soft, your worship would have termed a little sentimental—I've met with some of them too in my day."

"And have, perhaps, a touch of it yourself, honest Jeremy?"

"No, no, your worship; I am a man, sir, of the world, and would as soon, therefore, you should accuse me of sincerity. What have I done, your worship, that *you* should blast my character? But let that stand—when Harry found himself wounded, and heard there was a debate as to what they should do with us, he desired, though he could hardly speak from the loss of blood, that we might be taken to the old woman's—for, said he, the game's all over, and as she must know it sooner or later, I'd like to see the poor old girl once more.

"'Twas a bad business!—they took us there as carefully as they could, and well I remember the shriek she gave when she saw her boy bedabbled over with his own blood, pale as death, and scarcely able to say one word to her—she seemed struck down at once.

"Our comrades gave her what money they had, and were obliged to make off, leaving us to be 'tended by the old woman and a little girl. Till this very hour the mother knew no more of the life her son was following than she knew of you, sir. He had led her to think that the money that he brought her was honestly gained; and when the truth came out, you may imagine what followed. To make matters worse, we did not dare send for a surgeon, though I wanted him to do so—but, poor fellow! he said, that for him it was useless, and it could only lead to my discovery;—I tried to send for one without his knowledge, but he found me out.

"The next day, feeling himself growing worse, a strange desire came over him respecting his burial. He insisted sending for a poor carpenter who was in his confidence, as a brother poacher on one or two occasions, and who repaired carts and such rude work, at a village some two miles off; he now made the fellow take his measure for a coffin, directed him as to the wood of which it should be made,

got him to scrawl out his bill, which he paid, and then had receipted. Some hours afterwards he grew delirious, and died in his mother's arms next morning.

"Poor old creature! she never held up her head afterwards. The carpenter screwed him down in his coffin, and put him a few feet below the earth, just outside his mother's threshold, while I, with time and patience, got my leg healed; but owing to the want of a surgeon, it grew crooked, as your worship sees, and shorter than the other, which has given me a graceful limp to this day.

"All the money given us by the late comrades of the poor lad being exhausted, I found that if I did not support his mother, there was every chance of her dying of want; for as to applying for relief elsewhere, that was out of the question; she did nothing but gibber and moan one half her time and cry the other. Under these circumstances, your worship, my lameness disqualified me for returning to my old trade, of which, in truth to say, I had somewhat taken a surfeit; and so being no longer able to be highwayman, I determined, for the present, to turn schoolmaster.

"In accordance with this resolution, I set up in my new calling in a pretty village not far distant—Mortlake—once famous for having had a tapestry manufactory, but ever after destined to be celebrated by the labours of that painstaking and fundamental instructing pedagogue, Jeremiah Wagstaff, otherwise surnamed—as I have before informed your worship—Jeremy the Honest.

"I have no doubt your worship will think me a very considerable fool for burdening myself with the support of poor Dame Finchley, when I might just have shaken my feathers and hopped off, leaving her to shift for herself. But somehow I could not let her perish, even though I had again become a member of good society.

"I may be blamed, 'tis true; but believe me for once, your worship, where our actions can gain for us the praise of our own hearts, we can afford to hear in silence and serenity the censures of others."

"I see, honest Jeremy, you have not been a schoolmaster for nothing?"

"No, your worship, nor for long neither; yet still permit me to say, I was most wretchedly paid. Do what you will, your worship, but never turn schoolmaster—unless, indeed, you wish for an employment that will at once reveal to you the greatest height of labour and the lowest depth of ingratitude.

"Whether I most instructed myself or scholars, I have not yet decided, sir; but finding that if I long continued the trade, I should have the plantagenista spouting out from the palms of my hands—for, in truth, the birch—or rather broom, for that was the plant gathered from the common—was never out of them,—I was not sorry when the emergencies of the state, and the patriotism of my neighbours, conduced to raise that trusty band of redoubted warriors, the Mortlake Volunteers;—an English specimen of troops, who received, from their valorous language and ferocious appearance, the very honourable epithet of "The Terrors of Europe,"—a name admirably adapted, your worship; for seeing that our ranks contained all the lame, impotent, and diseased of the village, I would have defied any nation in Europe, ay, or the world to boot, to have beheld us without dread of an infection.

"The toga now gave way to arms, and I became a warrior in the uniform of this redoubted corps—if indeed, that dress might be called a uniform, when no two were alike. However, being the best talker and writer among them, I was a distinguished officer, and it was no uncommon thing to hear some of my disorderlies exclaiming, 'I say, you Mr. Jeremy, when 'll you have done with your drill?' 'Drat your blood, Mr. Jeremy, will you let us go, I say—confound the bones and soul of ye, I say, I've got a tich of the gout—I'll fall down—I will, that I will—I won't stand it any longer,—curse you, Mr. Jeremy, if you keep us under arms any longer I'll raise your rent,' and so on, sir. But troops were scarce, and an advantageous offer having come for such of us as chose to volunteer for the West Indies, I longed to see a little of the world and have a change of life, and so, Mrs. Finchley being dead; and buried by the parish, I enrolled myself as one to go, and received an ensigncy in the —th foot; a regiment, to be sure, not exactly of the most distinguished name, but one doubtless very honourable, since I belonged to it.

"As a dabbler in the poets, your honour doubtless knows the charms of home. Even Ovid pined in Scythia as his thoughts strayed towards Rome; nor could Dante, of a later date, acknowledge any comforts when in exile.

"Even so, sir, did Jeremy the Honest feel the cockles of his heart expand—excuse so unclassical a phrase, your worship—when the orders of his government bade him once more inhale his native air amid old hilly Devon, preparatory to embarking at the port of Plymouth.

"Having narrowly escaped missing my passage, while dutifully employed in squandering the money that was advanced to me to meet my expenses, I arrived on board the ship appointed to receive me. She happened to be under way, and I without a penny in my purse, or a change to my back.

"Such an uproarious crew of young fellows as I met, too! Deliver me, sir—the wildest monkeys in Barbary were tame compared to them. They would have me for a butt, whether I liked it or not.

"First I took it in fun, then in earnest; but it was all the same, every trick under the sun they played me, and one beside. They drove me pretty well distracted; not to say drunk, your worship, for that they made me every night; till at last, in one of these pretty Bacchanalian fits, they tied me down to the table, and tattooed 'Death or Glory' on my forehead.

"Save your worship, 'twas one of the most cruel things they could have done to a gentleman of my persuasions; for go where I would thenceforward, any man might clap his finger on me." As honest Jeremy said this, he removed the fragment of hat which he had hitherto worn, and there in bold, blue, staring letters, were nothing less than the words he had mentioned.

As I looked at him at this moment, I could not forbear bursting out laughing at so ridiculous a figure. Fancy a gentleman of Mr. Jeremy's cut and honesty, whose nose having received a motion to go to the right, had by the strength of pure affection stirred up a rebellion between the eyes; one of which had followed the nose's example, while the other had discountenanced it.

He was a fellow, too, of no bad height or make, if I except the lameness of his leg; but as for his face, never did I see one of such expression! No, nor one of so many; it was ever varying, and spoke each character its owner could by any possibility assume, except ill-nature. The eyes were of so mild a hue, such a constant, but subdued smile played round his white and snowy teeth, that it was impossible to believe him ill-tempered.

"And so, Jeremy, they thought you born for Death or Glory?"

"Bad luck attend them, I got that name for ever afterwards, but I did not bear it long, for by the time I got to Cork, my gentlemen had made me so sick of soldiering, that I even made use of such means of repairing my mis-

fortunes as Nature had afforded me: to wit, my legs. Breaking my leave at an opportune moment, I walked off one fine morning, and left my shipmates to make Barba-does without me.

"Having a natural liking to a metropolis, I soon transported myself to Dublin, where, nothing loath to improve my stock of knowledge, I found there was only one point in which I found the Irish superior to myself,—that of the art of begging, honoured sir; and this I had the satisfaction of learning to perfection.

CHAPTER XVII.

EXHIBITS

"A hermit hoar in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray."

"Coming over to England in due course of time," continued the honest Jeremy, "with some fresh acquaintance, we met, though I don't rightly know how, with an accident in the shape of a burglary, which we chanced to commit with very indifferent success on the road. This, sir, rendered it convenient for us to retire into close quarters, and working my way towards London by degrees, I happened to stop one day at the gate of a curious gentleman, who has a place in Surrey.

"The fact was, sir, that finding the gate open, I just looked in, to see if no little thing about the grounds might be in want of my attentions, but happening, instead, to run against the proprietor, he had the impertinence to ask what brought me there.

"I saw at a look that he was a trifle out of the common. So, mustering up a little confidence, I replied, 'My legs, your honour and a love of natural scenery; for you must know, good gentleman, that I am a poor scholar, and I see that your lines might have fallen in worse places; as Æneas said to Dido when measuring out the walls of Troy.'

"'Friend,' quoth my new acquaintance very gravely,

‘I do not doubt you are a poor scholar, a very poor one—you may not be without comprehension, but surely you are somewhat in want of information.’

“‘No, no, your worship,’—said I, ‘if that were all I was in want of, I would be content! Is it information, honoured sir, that you would give me?’

“‘Yes, my good man, it is—knowledge is power.’

“‘Then in that case will your honour give me information where I am to get a dinner?—for if knowledge is power, *victuals* is strength, I can tell your worship!’

“Believe me, sir, I had the length of his foot in no time. I had a dinner, ay and a chat too—told his worship as many lies as might have satisfied a more ravenous appetite for the marvellous than even his, and then went off to bed with that peculiar pride, respected sir, which waits upon industrious exertion.

“Well, sir, the next day, out came as pretty a maggot from the gentleman’s brains as you would wish to see. What do you think he wanted, sir?”

“Why, as you seem to insinuate that it was something very much out of the common—perhaps an honest man.”

“Your worship forgets he had that in me!”

“True, Jeremy! well then, what?”

“Why, a hermit, sir.”

“A what?”

“A hermit—yes, nothing less would suit him. He’d recently bought his house and grounds, and in laying out the latter, had built a nook on purpose, fitted it up in a proper style, and advertised for an inhabitant. As yet he had found none to suit him; but seeing something very fine, I suppose in my face, your worship, he offered it to me!”

“Nonsense!”

“Ay, that’s just what I thought of it, all except the terms; which, though hard enough in some conditions, were yet so reasonable in others, that I closed with them at once.”

“And what were they, Jeremy?”

“Why, your worship, I was to live under-ground, in his hermitage, for six years, I was to let my hair and nails grow, I was to speak to no one, not even the servant, who brought me my food, never to ramble beyond the grounds, nor ever to be seen in them after seven in the morning, or before six at night. If I kept the whole of the agreement, I was to have fifty pounds a year for life. If I broke any

of the terms, I was liable to be sent trotting at a moment's warning.

"The hermitage was a snug little place, lighted with three lamps, nicely furnished with a dormitory, a bath, and an organ; and I was to have as many books as I pleased. Well, sir, I confess I had long had some compunctions, and was not very sorry at the opportunity of reforming my character, which was thus thrown in my way. You will hardly believe, sir, that such a thing was in me, but for no less than two years and a half, I managed so far to conform to my terms, or rather make my master believe that I conformed to them, as to remain in my singular berth. I passed my time in reading, and a dreamy state of indolence: for Nature had kindly given to me a taste for books, and a fine capacity for sleep.

"Unfortunately, however, my master had a wife, who was also a mistress, inasmuch as the roast was entirely of her ruling, and as she must needs be troubling her head with what didn't concern her, she caught my hermitship enjoying a little innocent chat with one of her nursery-maids, one summer's evening.

"On the next day, my beard was shaved, my hair and nails were cut, my robes and rosary resigned, and I on my way to London, with a hundred pounds in my pocket—for I will say this for my master, after all, he was a good hearted gentleman—though he had a wife.

"As for the rest of my tale, your worship, it is soon told. I lived the life of a gentleman on my hundred pounds while it lasted, which was just six weeks; when Fate obliged me once more to have recourse to my original mendicant propensities, some three days ago; since when I have had the felicity of falling in with a gentleman, who seems to possess an intuitive feeling for the little foibles of an humble character like mine.

"One, in short, sir," with a low bow to me, "whom it would be a pleasure even to know, but whom to serve is nothing short of ecstasy."

"Mr. Jeremy, I am in an easy position, or I would get up to make you a profound obeisance."

"Nay, nay, then, sir, I beg of you not to do that, it would indeed be a thousand pities ever to let your good manners interfere with your worship's ease."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Shows how Wortley Montague received some excellent advice from Jeremy the Honest, and the use he made thereof.

A WORTHY and respectable gentleman having by this time arrived from Monmouth Street, bearing about his person every legitimate warranty of a true descent from Moses, I soon had the satisfaction of seeing honest Jeremy in a suit somewhat better suited to the new turn which his fortunes had taken.

Having arrayed him in a very plain but genteel suit of brown, I gave him, over and above, a great-coat; with this express stipulation, that whenever the weather was hot and fine, it should be worn by him, whenever it was cold or wet—by me.

Having paid and dismissed the Israelite, I now asked my new domestic if he was ready to follow my fortunes whithersoever they might lead. Receiving an answer strongly in the affirmative, I said, "You are a gentleman, Mr. Jeremy, who happen to have seen some little of the world; just favour me with your advice in a matter which lies near my heart.

"Being myself a youth of peculiar habits, and one who will at some future day come to the possession of a large fortune, I am not willing that my change of circumstances should find me in ignorance of the most perfect mode of enjoying property—I mean a thorough and practical knowledge of as many modes and stations of life as it is possible for me to experience.

"First of all I wish to run through the gamut of the professions, and then to try the various manners of different nations, together, in short, with every change of life and position. Having a fair chance of being then able to judge of mankind, under a few of the almost innumerable phases which they exhibit, I hold that I shall, in some degree at least, be enabled to pronounce as to which is the truest happiness for man, and which the shortest path whereby to attain to it; for it is a question on this point which has set me on my rambles.

"Now, Mr. Jeremy, you perceive that I am perfectly clear as to the object which I set out to gain. I have not

hitherto met with the success I expected, but I strongly hope better things for the future, inasmuch as that, first, I have now the benefit of your advice, and second, in looking at past misfortunes, I make allowance for a young beginner. Still, I do confess myself a little puzzled at this moment as to the arena on which I shall next choose to start——”

“Pardon me, respected sir, for interrupting you, but as your worship has displayed your great discernment in consulting such an adviser, allow me to ask a question, which will, I think, tend very considerably to shorten your hesitation.

“Your worship must have perceived, that men of enlarged minds, always at first debating on an important question, resolve it into one or more grand principles. This method considerably simplifies the process to be undergone. Of these principles the present question resolves itself into two, and no more. Whether, namely, in your future operations for a better knowledge of the world, you intend your course to be taken upon the honest or the dishonest line—the black or white squares on the chess board?

“I have not the honour of a knowledge of your worship’s history, and the goddess of delicacy forbids that I should pry into the affairs of other people; but though your worship has said you were ultimately to come into an estate, you did not say how; and though your honour spoke so reasonably of happiness connected with property, still you overlooked the little point as to whether it was to be the happiness of enjoying your own property, or the property of other people. Define your principles, sir, and I’m your man. But really, honoured sir, without principles—forgive my saying so, your worship, but I must repeat it—really without your principles——”

“True! true! I know not how I could have forgotten those in consulting with you! But before I can satisfactorily answer your question, Mr. Jeremy, pray what do you understand by the term *honesty*?”

“Honesty, respected sir, is an art—it is the art of taking what does not belong to you, *without* losing your reputation.”

“Indeed, Mr. Jeremy! a very nice art that, I must say; and pray then, under these circumstances, what is *dishonesty*? I suppose there is no such a thing!”

“I beg your pardon, sir, there is; though it is not an art, but a folly. It is the unforgivable folly of taking what

does not belong to you, *and* losing your reputation. The being detected in the fact, your honour, makes all the difference in the world; ay, and *with* the world too, your worship."

"Excellent dicta! and since these are your moral principles, what, my good friend, may be your political predilections?"

"Why, sir, I thank the gods, that I am a sound Tory in Church and State."

"Faith! if I did not suspect as much, most honest Jeremy! and, to be short with thee, under your peculiar modes of thinking, I find it very difficult to hit on a right mode of expression; one which will convey to your mind the meaning predominating in my own. So with regard to *my* principles, you must just believe them to be the very reverse of your own, and as far remote as possible from dishonest, either by your definition or mine."

"Since that's the case, sir, I presume you intend to follow a line of operations which I should term superhonest to gentlemen of my persuasion."

"Very possible."

"Ah, sir! I find I have a double ground for advising you to be cautious. Over-honesty's the nearest road to Tyburn—and if I must tell you the naked truth, that's the very reason why I've always so industriously avoided it."

"Forgive me, your worship, for being so free, but since you seem determined to hold to this violent mode of thinking, the best thing you can do at first, is, to take in a good sound stock of instruction. Had you been going upon the other line of principles, I myself could have been of some service—as in teaching you to pick a pocket, or to lift a shutter, to say nothing of lock-tampering or door loosening, by which you might have begun your career with some credit, and done honour to your tutor; now, however, I fear, I can hardly be of the service I had thought. 'Tis so long, you see, sir, since I left the service of the worthy dean, that I've nearly forgotten his reverence's sermons—perfect as I had them once."

"Perhaps this bad memory on my part is attributable to bad example of all he preached on his;* for he and my

* Since Mr. Jeremy the Honest is thus pleased to speak of the Diocese of Exeter in times past, we gladly avail ourselves of this opportunity, to pay a well deserved tribute to our Right Reverend

mistress quarrelled so often, that to my mind—to use an eastern metaphor—they existed only to feed on the bone of contention and drink of the waters of strife,—the only water his reverence took, may it please your worship—for if he drank like a fish, it was not in kind but in quantity. Fine gills his reverence had, to be sure—as rosy as his claret! At first I never could make out, why this harmonious couple always called each other ‘*dear*,’ but I soon discovered that it simply meant—they were dear to one another at any price.”

“But stay,” said I, catching up a paper on which my eye had glanced——”

“As long as your worship pleases,” replied Jeremy, “since the bottle is with me.”

“Fill then, thou paragon of honesty, and listen, for here’s something that decides me at once,”—reading from the paper the following advertisement:—

“‘Wanted, in the family of a clergyman of high orthodox principles, a young man of good attainments and abilities. He must write a clear hand, be well read in classical and general literature and theological writers. He must be perfectly versed in the arts of composition, and receive his board and lodging as a handsome remuneration for his services.’ ‘Oh, liberal offer!’” said I; and taking down the address and paying our reckoning, I left the tavern without another word, determined to try for a situation that at once jumped with my humour.

Brother the present Bishop thereof; the which will be the more sincere from the total difference of opinion on many points between us. Few Diocesans have entered an Episcopal see with such strong prejudices against them to overcome—fewer still have turned them so completely in their favour—while none have so entirely proved the benefit that will be conferred on the Church of England, by strengthening the power of her Bishops to correct the negligent and promote the worthy.

PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

CHAPTER XIX.

In which Wortley Montague enters into the service of one of the props of the Church, with some slight description of the same.

"JEREMY, you are right," said I, as we gained the street; "for a youth first starting in life, there's nothing like good sound principles."

"Save your worship! the soul without morality, is no better than a mariner's compass with my grandmother's darning-needle in it, and well I know that nothing could be worse."

"Humph! I don't see that—how so?"

"Because, your worship, my grandmother never had a darning-needle—she was a primitive lady, and, like the Scotch, went without stockings or shoes either."

"Well, Jeremy, like myself, you excel at a simile; but what think you of my scheme in answering this advertisement?"

"Why, sir, however you may answer it, depend upon it 'twill never answer me. What's to become of your humble servant? Board and lodging for one will scarcely do for two, by my arithmetic! The worthy dean's more worthy steward would else have scorned to teach it me."

"Well, well! leave that to me. What think you of the duties for which I am required? As the fellow asks for a secretary, I suppose he wants a boy to clean his shoes."

"Not to clean, your worship, only to kiss them—I've met with many secretaries in my day, and I know that's always the chief part of their business!"

"Humph—is it a pleasant occupation, think you, Jeremy?"

"That depends, sir, upon the leather, and the pliability of the back-bone. Some men can stoop to it without feeling the inconvenience, others not so readily. I never tried the office with a gentleman, nor ever wish for it. Even with the softer sex I was oftentimes above my business."

"Ah, Jeremy! beloved souls! they think their chains are light—we only find them dear."

"Yes, sir; I've paid a heavy price for being bound with them, and would again."

"Why, so will I; but come, turn to the right, and lead the way to the address given in this advertisement."

"Oh, I know the coffee-house, sir; 'tis in a little street to the southward of St. Paul's—I've drank a bottle or two there before to-day."

"Yes, doubtless, and a pretty debauched looking rogue you are!"

"Your worship says that advisedly; for men are judged from their society!"

"Are they?" said I, after an absent pause which lasted till we had gained the tavern door, and then we entered.

Having announced our errand, we were shown into a dark room, where were assembled a number of competitors for this precious prize. It was well that we were so informed, I should otherwise have imagined myself in a meeting of the poor of the parish; for with the exception of myself and servant, had every coat in the room been patched together, they would scarcely have made a decent one. My soul sank within me at the sight of so much misery as was depicted in the pallid, haggard countenances of many.

The first emotion of my heart, was that of sincere commiseration for them. "Can it be possible," thought I, "that so many men of such literary attainments as those required by the advertisement, should or could by any possibility be in a state of such reduced circumstances? Poor fellows! what is mere idle whim to me may be bread to them." As these feelings passed through my mind, I was about to withdraw; that, at least, I might not be a rival in the way. Just as I turned my back to do so, the major part of the company thought fit to raise a laugh at the expense of my more decent appearance; and this by a jest, just intended to be heard, but still be unnoticeable.

"Very good," said I, "if you can thus wantonly insult a stranger, I can imagine you less the victims of distress than imprudence," and I walked to the fire-place with Jeremy.

At this moment a door opened, and the person appointed to select a candidate came in amongst us. Casting a look about him, he came up to me at once, and learning my business, took me into another room. He asked for no testimonials or references, but with many winks and nods, informed me, that the situation was one of great

confidence—could he rely upon me? might he be sure of my prudence? was I close? was I no babbler?

With a most ingenuous look, I informed him, that graves were not half so secret as myself. He said he liked the comparison, it was well suited to the matter in hand.

I grew alarmed! Could the clergyman be a body snatcher from his own burial ground! This would be something like a new employment for a secretary. After a few hems, and still more scrutinizing glances, I was told “that his reverend friend had a large parish—you understand me, sir?—a very rambling parish—not many souls in proportion, to be sure, but great extent—heavy work, sir! laborious work—living very poor, too—won’t afford a curate. My friend, sir, has a family—distant relations! The gift is in the hand of the squire—a very difficult gentleman, sir—requires a great deal of management—you must have heard his name, Mr. —, the celebrated lay impropiator, the largest in the country—a very difficult man, sir—a very large parish—very laborious cure indeed—straggling, sir, very straggling—a very confidential situation—a highly honourable situation.” Then, after closely questioning me between these numerous blanks and pauses, “I think, sir, I may depend upon your confidence. Yes, yes, I think I may. Allow me to put one or two questions to you, and we’re agreed; just for form’s sake, sir, as I promised to put them;” and then the dapper little body read from a paper several theological queries, of which it is doubtful whether he or I knew least.

These I answered in the best way I could. He next gave me the address of the clergyman, which was in Hampshire, not very far from the little borough of Andover; telling me, at the same time, that I must start that night. He then remarked, casually, that his place was booked to go in a few hours down to Leicester.

I was rather surprised that he asked for no references nor character, nor seemed to make any inquiry as to who I might be. He desired me, certainly, to write out my name, which I did; styling myself, as usual, Edward Wortley. Whether this negligence was the result of carelessness or design I know not.

Going back with me into the little room where he had left all the others waiting, he addressed them with “Gentlemen, I cannot say any thing to you at present, but if

you will call here to-morrow, at this time, you shall hear farther."

Far enough! thought I, and cool enough too; to let all these poor fellows have the trouble of returning for nothing;—but it was no affair of mine, and making for a Salisbury coach, I started for my new destination.

"Well, your worship, he consents that I'm to be of the party, does he?" demanded Jeremy, as we walked along.

"Faith, I never asked him," said I; "but come with me, and if my new master won't take me in with you, he sha'n't have me without. I suppose you'll have no objection to make yourself generally useful, as they have it?"

"None, your worship, only allow me to remark, that the very name of Salisbury is enough for a gentleman who has been accustomed to course upon the plain so freely as myself."

"Ha, ha! true! and now I think of it, mind, honest Mr. Jeremy, you'll steal from no one but myself, on the honour of a rogue."

"I promise it, your worship!"

"That's well! and now I must tell you, I know no more what my duties are to be than if I were to have none. In truth, I am dying of curiosity to learn. Something very confidential, that little fellow told me—I thought at first he meant church-yard robbing."

"We might do worse, your worship," said the imperturbable philosopher.

"Worse! Mr. Jeremy! Now tell me candidly," said I, "pray what would be too bad for you?"

"My deserts, your worship."

"Faith! and I think so too," replied I, unable to refrain from smiling at so ready a rascal. However, pushing on, sufficiently light of heart, we reached the coach just before starting, and being fortunate enough to get places, arrived at the rectory to which we were bound between four and five o'clock next day.

Having inquired for Parson Longtext, for such was the name of his reverence, the man servant stood lolling against the door-way for a few moments, and after surveying our exterior with all a menial's insolence, replied surlily, "Yes, he is at home, but he's so deeply engaged he can see no one. What's your business?"

"Tell him, a gentleman sent by Mr. Tullamore from Town, desires to speak to him."

"Ay, ay!" said the fellow slowly, "then as soon as he's disengaged I'll let him know."

The door being now slammed in our faces, we were left to wait outside. "The devil shake that fellow!" quoth Jeremy, with a grin. "If we ever effect a lodgement here, trust me, your worship, but I'll work him!"

"Jeremy, you have my free permission, as long as you refrain from any mal-appropriation. I suspect we have got into a pretty den of pride and ignorance; for the master generally serves as a text to the man—but any thing for an adventure."

"Rightly argued, your worship! That gentleman can have but a poor regard for his own good breeding, who retains an ill-mannered domestic at his door. As a proof of which, respected sir, if you will only come to where I stand, and look over that low window-blind, you'll see how 'deeply engaged' his reverence is at present."

"Whip me, your worship, with St. Anthony's rods, if that sight does not remind me of my old master the dean! You see they can't take me in. I'm free of the fraternity, sir; extremes have always met; and after all, a high churchman and a highwayman, are only a pair of honest people travelling to the same point, by slightly differing paths."

As Jeremy said this, I followed his directions, and clearly perceived his reverence before a fine blazing wood fire. One of the recluse's elbows rested on the dining table that brightly reflected the glasses and decanters it supported, the other hung listless by his fat sides, which, duly held up by a fine easy chair, sunk and rose in excellent time to a heavy snore that resounded through the room.

"Deeply engaged!" said I, admiring the sumptuary picture. "Jeremy, thou zealous church reformer, put your hand to the knocker, I beg of you, and let us have a peal to which the worthy rector's church-bells would be a trifle."

"I will, sir," replied Jeremy, and suiting the action to the word, up jumped the worthy rector with a start, and the hurrying footsteps of his servant were heard in the hall.

Hastening back to the porch which I had left by a few steps, the astonished rogue no sooner opened the door, than I stepped past, saying "I think your master's disengaged at last, John. Ah! and here he is," seeing the

parlour door opened by his reverence in person. "Pray walk in, gentlemen," said he, never dreaming from my dress and manner that I could be come in any thing like a dependent capacity.

Having seated ourselves with due deliberation in his comfortable room, he demanded with a smiling countenance whether we would not take some wine? We at once very frankly accepted his offer and thanked him for it; he looked round for some clean glasses, and finding none, he rung the bell. I then opened the purport of my visit.

Mercy! with what a start the intelligence was received; so wide did the good gentleman open his eyes at the audacity (I suppose) of my entrance, that I at first doubted whether they would ever again condescend to close.

Drawing from my pocket the letter of Mr. Tullamore, I was in the act of putting it into his hand, when John—whose real name by the by was Thomas—came to answer the bell.

"Did you ring, sir."

"Yes—put on—ahem—some more—wood to the fire," quoth his reverence.

Jeremy nudged my arm, then aloud, as Thomas was about to retire, "Very fine claret that seems to be."

His reverence read on without a word.

"Do you want any thing more, sir?" demanded Thomas.

"Yes," said his master, without looking up, although the note was so short that he must have read it twice over. "You," lowering his voice to a whisper, "you may take away the things, Thomas."

"The rectory is some miles from the village," quoth the undaunted Jeremy.

"Yes," said the rector drily, "you are right." Then elevating his voice into a pompous tone, and giving one or two good sounding hems, he managed with well-practised tact to cover the retreat of his bottles, as they jingled towards the sideboard, with what appeared to be the remains of a very fine devil.

"Sir," said he when his object was effected, "this letter mentions one, and here are two of you."

"Yes, sir," said I, and I stopped short—but the ready man of honesty saw my dilemma, and took me out of it in a moment. "Yes, sir," said he, "there are two of us, and yet there is only one of us, I can assure you, sir; for I and my master are one.

"Heaven bless him, sir!—he's all that a master should be—has the whole of the cardinal virtues, and one to the back of them, as you may say—and the greatest of these is charity, as your worship knows.

"As for me, sir, I am but a poor orphan boy, with nothing save my innocence to recommend me, and whom Mr. Wortley's father brought up and educated, fed and clothed from the cradle, sir—yes, indeed, that did he, your worship—taking me over with him to Spain, where for many a long year he was a rich and flourishing merchant.

"I had the special charge of Mr. Wortley there, whose poor mother, bless your reverence, died soon after childbirth; and what's more—sorrow see the light of it—his honoured father, five months since, was fain to follow her.

"Alas, respected sir! what's more fickle than fortune? Instead of the great wealth Mr. Wortley was supposed to possess, his effects just paid his debts and brought us over to England.

"I was willing to work, seeing I was born under the curse of Cain, your reverence; but my young master wasn't able to do that. We saw your advertisement, sir, and here we are.

"Don't except to poor Jeremy, I beseech your reverence; but have some bowels of compassion for our great misfortunes.—I can make myself useful in many ways, and it please you, sir; just ask my master—though to be sure he's nigh broken-hearted with his grief—as a dutiful son ought to be. It is nothing more or less than this has made me bold to tell our story—I knew Master Edward there could never trust himself to speak of his poor father's death, much less his mother's!

"But, your reverence, candour with a humane heart is never lost—and your worship's appearance alone is to blame if I have erred."

"Well, well, my man! very proper! very proper!" murmured his reverence—then in an under tone, "Curse these fellows!—a pretty pair of sanctified rogues to stumble on!—Very proper, sir, though I hardly know what to say to it.—Did Mr. Tullamore know of your bringing your servant down here, Mr. Thingumbob?"

Taking away from my face the handkerchief I had used to conceal the laughter produced by Jeremy's audacious story, and with which I had pretended to dry my

eyes at my supposed father's loss—to say nothing of Lady Mary being killed outright in child-birth—I now looked at the rector for an instant, hardly knowing whether to say yes or no.

But the man of honesty was not to be surprised.

“Mr. Tullamore, and please your worship,” interrupted he rather sharply, “would have known all about it, but just as my young master there was going to enter on the matter, he broke it off, as he said, to get away in time for the Leicester coach; and after the high terms in which he spoke of your reverence, we could not think but that you would be happy of such an opportunity to exercise the benevolence of a generous bosom!”

“Humph!” said his reverence; “these, sir, are sad times for the church!—her children have to struggle hard against designing enemies; not but that there would be enough to assist many a poor child of want, and what’s more, to reward adequately even those of her own offspring who are faithful to her interests; but, sir, there are drones in the hive!—drones, sir!—content to live upon the honey which the labours of the industrious have stored up against the want and severity of winter. Your case is a hard one, I admit; but still I will see what is to be done if you can, as you say, turn your hand to something, and make yourself of some trifling use in my house—such, for instance, as in turning the spit—plucking the poultry—assisting in the scullery—cutting the wood—sweeping the yard—drawing the water—attending the stable—staking the garden fences, and lending a hand in the threshing-barn below—why I may, I say, be able, perhaps, to extend my charity towards you; has your master brought any testimonials?”

“Why, bless your good heart, your reverence! we’d only landed from Cadiz three days when we saw your advertisement at the Cock and Feathers in Friar Lane, Lawrence Poultney; for there, sir, we put up—civil, quiet people they are, your reverence.”

“Well, well, Mr. Tullamore seems to have engaged you somewhat suddenly, but you must give me a reference to some of the late merchant’s correspondents in London, and then if your master, when his distress moderates, should prove equal to the duty I have in view, the affair may be managed.”

“Thank you, sir,” said I demurely, drawing my handkerchief away, “I think that you can feel that some

emotion is natural enough for one in my situation—and faith it was awkward enough! I am, however, very ready to submit to any test of my humble capacity; and, indeed, should feel grateful to enter on any topic less afflicting to my feelings than the present.”

“Yes, yes, I understand,” said the rector, ringing the bell.

“Thomas”—to the servant, “My lights, pen, ink, and paper, and take that person away—what’s your servant’s name?”

“My name’s Jeremy, your worship.”

“Very good! go out with my butler, and get some refreshment.”—“Here, Thomas,” sinking his voice to a whisper—“have you no broken victuals in the kitchen?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Thomas, in the same significant key.

His reverence gave a nod—Thomas returned him two—the principal and interest, I presume; and then taking Jeremy by the shoulder, I was left alone with the rector.

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CHAPTER XX.

Shows how the prop of the Church rewarded his secretary.

“Now Mr. What’s your name,” said the rector, as soon as the door closed, “the proof of the pudding’s in the eating.” “Exactly, sir! That’s what my grandmother used to tell me,” replied I, forgetting for a moment my present circumstances.

“What do you mean by that, sir?”

“Oh! oh! simply—simply,” said I, rather confused, “simply, sir, that as your worship has heard of my mother having died in child-bed, my grandmother had the charge of my infancy. She was a Spanish lady, and you must be aware that the proverb mentioned, was borrowed by us from the Castilians.”

“True, I had forgotten,” said his reverence in some confusion, being at the same time as much aware of it as I was, but fortunately for mankind, ignorance lies for

ever at the mercy of wit, or presumption would know no bounds.

"To proceed to business then, sir," resumed the rector. "You are of course well versed in the art of composition?"

I bowed. "Sit down then at this table; there are the materials for writing—compose me a discourse—such as might be read to a body of enlightened people. I will select for you, the subject of your theme."

Doing as I was bid, the rector gave me nothing more or less than a text, and although he had not used the term sermon, I saw very plainly that such was the discourse he required.

Feeling that the ground, on which Jeremy and myself now stood, was rather doubtful, I determined to exert myself to the utmost, having naturally some turn for didactic writing, in the course of two hours I flattered myself that I had succeeded in finishing no despicable thesis.

The charitable rector, in the mean while, had resumed his nap, when Thomas returning, aroused his master, saying that the horses were about to have their feed of corn for the night.

"Feed of corn, eh? Feed of corn did you say, Thomas? Go on, young man, I'll be back presently;" and springing up with all the alacrity of a man about to visit his mistress, my reverend friend was out of the room in a moment.

He was yet taking down his hat in the passage, when a ringing was heard at the gate, and a message brought to him that widow Regan, a poor woman very dangerously ill in the parish, desired his attendance.

"Ah! poor woman! ah! poor woman! send for Mr. Plaine—send for Mr. Plaine immediately, Thomas?"

"You forget, sir," replied Thomas, "that Mr. Plaine's ill a-bed too."

"Oh!" said the rector peevishly, and something very like "d—n it," was heard as he rejoined,—

"Tell her I'll be there by and by then, Thomas," at the same time quickening his steps down the back stairs that led to his stables, and mumbling as he went, "One of your regular old trots, I suppose! These poor seem to take a pleasure in dying at this time o' night! and a cold easterly wind blowing too! No end to the colds and indigestion they give their betters!"

An hour's absence of the worthy man, having given me time to revise my theme, I took care to improve it to the best advantage; and the tea things being laid with a very fair proportion of plate in the shape of tea and coffee pots, cream ewers, toast stands, and so on, the master of the house made his appearance, all redolent of the odours of the horse-stall.

He at once desired me to read my performance. This I accordingly did, and most graciously I must say it was received. In truth I could scarcely account for the gleam of pleasure which seemed to twinkle in the reverend gentleman's eyes, as he moved his head every now and then, in approbation of some turned period, or carefully weighed sentence.

Having finished the perusal of the manuscript, he took it from my hand, and giving it an attentive examination, said, "Sir, that is not bad; though if any thing a little too florid."

After this piece of criticism, he relapsed into silence, and continued rubbing his forehead for some minutes.

He then added, "Yes, you will do, sir—you will have to write two such discourses every week, besides a few other matters—such as the clerical correspondence of the living, to which is annexed the rural deanery of this district. As my parish is large, and duties very laborious, I cannot devote as much time to some pursuits as I could wish; if therefore your exercises are got up as they ought to be, I may occasionally reward your labours by the gratification of allowing you to hear them delivered to my flock. In such a situation as yours, I need not enlarge upon the virtue of prudence—you may now retire. You will find that my domestics enjoy a very comfortable board; and I sincerely hope, for your sake, that you will be able to discharge your duties properly."

For some moments I was confounded! Pretty well prepared as I was for a good sample of a churchman's arrogance, I did not exactly expect to receive in one moment, the onus of a rector's sermons to compose, with the reward of dining with his scullions.

I felt very much inclined to indulge in a violent burst of laughter before his reverence's face, but controlling my mirth, I gravely observed, that I must have misunderstood him. "Something about board I believe you said, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Thingumbob. I said, you'll find a very

comfortable board below, and I hope the ability to do your duty."

"Very likely, Mr. Longtext, but allow me to remark, that I have always been accustomed to consider the condition of a secretary as a perfect bar to his enjoying the privileges of a menial's mess."

"How, sir?—hoity toity!—why, sir, what do you require? Did you expect to be found at *my table*? Did you expect to eat with *me*?"

"Fate forbid, sir, that I should be ambitious of the honour of such society!—that is a matter entirely for your decision; but since it proves so ineligible, permit me to say, that I either take my meals by myself, or not at all. I am perfectly aware of the value of my service; nor on such a point can I do you the injustice to suppose you ignorant."

"Humph! so it seems. Well, sir, I can only tell you, that, before now, your betters have thought themselves well off with worse."

"Very likely, sir, and so it seems do my inferiors with better—on this point, sir, however, I have not another opinion."

"Humph!—well—well!—I say, well! Things have come to a pretty pass!—to what height will low-bred pride mount next, I should like to know!"

"Why not quite to heaven, sir, *you* may be very sure; perhaps only to a rectory," replied I, rather quickly.

For a moment his little twinkling eye glared at me most vindictively; but finding he had run against a wrong headed personage, he got up—rang the bell, and, while his face grew pale with anger, directed a fire to be lit, and supper to be laid in the library.

"Sir," making me a mock-reverential bow, as soon as the servant retired, "sir, you have your separate table for to-night; and to-morrow you shall hear from me." Proceeding now to take his coffee without another word, I sat by in fasting and contempt.

Presently Thomas came in to announce the lighting of my fire, and the readiness of my supper.

"Thomas," said his master, "I wish you would go down into the village—knock up Mr. Potion, the apothecary, and get him to give you another bottle of that wash which he sent me two months since. I rather thought the day before yesterday, that I was going to have chapped knees. That wo'n't be pleasant if the wind should change to the southward to-morrow morning."

"Very well, sir," replied Thomas, "then I'll go at once, for it's getting late."

"Yes, do—and Thomas?"

"Sir."

"As you're passing by, you may call in at widow Regan's; and if she's not gone yet, you may say, I'll give her a look to-morrow morning on my way to the hill." Thomas closed the door. "Poor ignorant wretches! they always delay these serious matters to the last moment!" muttered the reverend rector, half by way of soliloquy, and half as an apologetic remark to me.

Ay, thought I, and as you have the cure of souls, what more proper than for you to follow their example; and postpone, sine die, that which was put off till to-day.

"You may go to your supper," surlily added the rector, as he found I did not reply.

"Thank you, sir," said I, withdrawing gladly on the moment. Closing the door upon Mr. Longtext, I left him to seek all the calm tranquillity of a couch of down; though, doubtless, the mollitude of the last was nothing to the softness of his heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

Which shows how the prop. of the Church went out to take the air.

AFTER a long journey, and no slight walk, it may easily be imagined, that I slept very soundly. I was, however, awakened on the ensuing morning by a considerable noise under my window, and the clatter of horses' hoofs. Springing up to see what was the matter, I found that my casement overlooked the stable-yard.

Here I beheld two superb hunters, all ready for the field; one bestrid by a fat, tall heavy personage in jockey-boots, white leathern breeches, brown coat with brass buttons, blue neckcloth, and a cockish beaver.

He held a heavy field-whip in his right hand, and was giving some directions to the rider of the other horse,—a

light young fellow who apparently accompanied him to afford a change of beasts, whenever the heat of the chase, or the weight of the master, should render it necessary.

Surely I know that voice, thought I, as the tones met my ear. Presently the sound of some one trotting down the road, which came under the rectory yard, was heard; when the huntsman, craning over the wall, seemed to recognise a friend.

Giving a hearty view halloo, he clapped spurs to his steed, darted out of the open door, and turned round the corner at a furious gallop. As he did this, however, his face came into full sight, and who should I recognise but my worthy lord and master the parson of the parish,—the pastor of his flock,—the rector of***.

"There you go, you worthy man," said I, laughing heartily, as I saw him taking the lead helter skelter over the hedges and ditches which adjoined his own glebe; "well may you talk of laborious duties, a large straggling parish, and the enemies of the church, you precious rector;—no wonder you are unable to give as much time to certain pursuits as you wish;—no wonder you are obliged to have recourse to the honourable system of getting some one to write your sermons. Excellent man! admirable as you must be confessed in all respects, is there any thing so wonderful about you as your conscience? How happy is the method, by which you undertake to discharge the awful responsibilities of a vicegerent of your God!"

Human nature is a melancholy thing;—so ran my reveries, while plunging my head into cold water,—and getting up is a part of it. St. Christopher undertake the cure of that Jeremy! he has a strange genius for lying. But, after all, who could see that roguish face of his, and not swear there was some good at the bottom of all his evil,—no slight quantity, by the by.

"I must take care of the fellow, for he's like a drowning man upon the surface, a straw would save him, or a sand would sink. Besides it is so much more pleasant to amend the lives of your fellow creatures, than to rectify your own. He has placed me in an awkward position by that rhodomontade of his. However, as I saw him down there with his hunting reverence, I must go and talk to the knave."

Dressing with all speed, I descended to the yard, where I found Master Jeremy, who having completed the task that had been assigned to him in the stable with his usual

adroitness, was now walking about with his hands in his breeches pockets, whistling Nancy Dawson.

"The top of the morning to your worship!" said he. "Does the secretary not join the parson?" with a sly wink.

"No, my worship the secretary wants to have some little private conversation, if that be possible, with a good-for-nothing vagabond,—one Jeremy surnamed the Honest," I replied, looking round to see that we were not overheard.

"I understand, sir," speaking low; then aloud, "a very fine orchard the rector has here; only come this way and see, Master Wortley:" and the rogue hobbled through a latched door opposite to that by which the fox-hunter had departed.

We now found ourselves alone. "Master Jeremy," said I, "did you not promise to be honest, after my interpretation?"

"Most true, your worship, and Jeremy the Honest always keeps his word, though I live to say it."

"You audacious varlet! how do you presume to tell me so, after that heap of falsehood which you so mercilessly laid on upon the worthy rector no later than last night? Do you not see, that you have made me responsible for the deceit, and a party in it? Who would believe the circumstances of the case, if we should be found out?"

"Found out, your worship, now that is dishonesty with a vengeance."

"Well sirrah, and what else can fairly be expected? Pray who are the London correspondents of my late lamented father, the Spanish merchant? To whom am I to refer the excellent Mr. Longtext?"

"Who are they, sir," said Jeremy, in his own dry imperturbable way, "why who should they be but—but, pulling from his pocket a slip of paper and reading from it, "Messrs. Tanhide and Carding, dealers in cordovan leather, No. 3, Close Court, Winter lane, Cheapside." To whom, may it please your worship, I have this morning referred our kind and as you say very excellent friend the rector."

"What in the name of fortune are you talking about?"

"Why, bless the heart of your worship, you see you're only a babe in the ways of the world yet, though you have been to Seville. I knew when we set out, that

you would but make a middling mess of this matter; but as you never consulted me about it, I let you have your own way, just to show you how wrongly you had acted.

"Still, your worship, I could never dream that you would have come so far upon your march without ever having laid down some sort of plan for a campaign. You see, therefore, sir, when I saw you put to such a pass as to be obliged to have recourse to a few irregularities of assertion, I took the liberty of coming to your assistance.

"I saw at a glance we had got into good quarters—for I know the church, your worship, before to-day—and having no mind to lose them by any indiscretion of your honour, I remembered that to lie with effect requires no slight practice as well as art. With regard to the reference, your worship may be easy—that's a thing I've been accustomed to deal in all my life, many's the one I've both given and had. Suspicion met is half disarmed, respected sir. So going up to the rector this morning as soon as he came into the stable, to see his beast saddled, I took the length of his foot in no time.

"Having seen a little of horse-flesh in my time, quickly talked him into as good a notion of himself and steed as any gentleman that takes the field this day. Then seeing him in the right cue for it, I pulled a pretty good face, and saying I wished to revert as little to you, about any thing connected with your poor dear father's loss as possible, told his reverence that any information he desired to gain he could procure by writing to either of the gentlemen of this firm, with whom your beloved parent had long carried on a large business in the skin line.

"His reverence said very well, and as I expected, merely read the address, and thrust it in his pocket, from which, your worship must know, I just took the liberty of extracting it again, as I helped the respected gentleman to mount his horse.

"By and by you see, sir, when he comes to look for this piece of paper, he'll think he's lost it in the field—then he'll intend to ask for it again, and then he'll forget it from day to day till, if you and I give him the satisfaction which can scarcely fail to accrue from such valuable services—why, ten thousand to one, if he ever troubles his head to write at all, sir.

"In the mean time, I can send up to the honest friend who lives at No. 3, and advertise him of the new character and condition under which he is to vouch for me,

These things, your worship, may seem difficult to some, and easy to others; but that all depends upon a knowledge of human nature, to which you cannot jump, respected sir, but only crawl. I may do these things safely enough, where you would be found out in the first step. "Thank you, Mr. Jeremy! but I have no ambition that way—neither can I allow you such a full exercise of your genius, while I am perforce responsible for it. This deceit is all very fine and clever, the more so as you have nothing to lose, Mr. Jeremy; but I consider it not a little gratuitous and most unsafe. Henceforth, no more of it. I should readily have extricated myself from a moment's embarrassment, and without any of this ridiculous web of entanglement."

"Bless your worship's heart! I like to hear of your simplicity—which to be sure, your honour, few men can hardly hope to possess till they've run away three times from school, besides a few other adventures. But I'm all obedience, your worship; and the next time—I'm dumb—not a word from me till you've broken down in the middle of your ballad, and then perhaps an odd stave or so may prove useful."

"Agreed, master Jeremy; and now what say you to our present quarters?"

"Why, your worship, I hardly know which are the best, the quarters or their owner; for you must know, I managed to get the whole of his history last night from Thomas, who is no bad fellow at bottom after all, seeing we managed to despatch nearly four bottles of wine after supper last night in the pantry."

"Ay, ay, is it so that the game is carried on below?"

"Yes, yes, your worship, like master like man; and if my mind's said, 'tis a toss up which is the most insincere of the two. However, sir, it was important to know a little of how the land lay, and I soon made Mr. Thomas disgorge me the history of the worthy rector. A heartier laugh, too, we had over it than he might have altogether relished."

"What was it, Jeremy?—Who is he?"

"A distant cousin of the squire's, sir, a resident in the county, and rector of this living by inheritance, as it might be—his family have the gift in their hands."

"What! the perpetual advowson?"

"Exactly, sir; and so our precious parson was brought up and educated on purpose for it."

"Ay, Jeremy!—but one might have guessed as much, from the admirable way in which he discharges its duties."

"True, sir; and as the living happened to fall vacant some little time before the reverend gentleman was as fully prepared as now, a curate was put in temporarily to hold it for his occupation. As a rectory it happened then to be a very poor one, for the tithes were rated low, and under the last incumbent had been leniently collected. But Mr. Longtext, by means of his superior and specific education, your worship, was enabled to despise these petty considerations, and make no secret of his intentions to double his tithes. This raised among his parishioners a very decided doubt whether Parson Longtext that would be was Parson Longtext that should be. They even managed to fling considerable obstacles in the way of his ordination. Having, however, effected this, his parishioners were electrified by his rising up suddenly in the pulpit one Sunday morning, and preaching to his old friends from a text on the payment of the uttermost farthing.

"How many of his hearers fainted, or how many went mad, I hardly know, your worship; but being speedily inducted, he was as good as his word—doubled his tithes, and depopulated his church, got up a nice quarrel with the choir, and popping the whole bunch of them into the Consistory Court—for your gentry of the pipe are a rare contumacious set—he soon had scarcely a soul left to squabble with but his churchwardens.

"They, however, having as natural a turn for this amusement as himself, he was not after all left much at a loss. At length, his parishioners, finding that empty or full, his church was equally a matter of consideration, were obliged by degrees to yield to the solicitations of their better and fairer halves. Since these could no longer dispense with their weekly display of themselves and finery to their neighbours.

"From these worthy motives, most respected sir, the church is now again filled, nor will it, I suppose, be again deserted, unless, indeed, some fresh and equally important occasion of wordly interest and pride should hold out their high inducements to disgracing themselves, and dishonouring their Creator."

"So I suppose, Mr. Jeremy, for if any thing is dear to man, it appears ever to be those numerous, but seemingly

petty, vices, which display at once the worst ingratitude and the greatest impiety."

"Alas! too true, your worship; yet, should we not temper our severity when sitting in judgment on a brother? For, surely, the difficulty with which we attain to virtue ourselves, should lead us to commiserate those whom folly or fatuity have tempted to abandon it."

"A very sapient observation, Mr. Jeremy; and one equally suited to the sinner or the saint. And, pray, if it be a fair question, of which may you have most in your strange composition?"

"A hard question, that, your worship!—though I will answer it sincerely. I am like many more, I suspect; a sinner by confirmed propensity; but, alas, sir, a saint by inclination only; and, jesting apart, respected sir, I doubt whether the best of us can candidly say more in his favour."

I was silent. "Jeremy's good sense," thought I, "has but too truly defined the fainting virtue of humanity! And is it not humiliating to consider—that a being so nobly endowed as man, should so frequently possess the sensibility to admire goodness without the strength to pursue it?"

CHAPTER XXII.

Shows how the prop of the Church managed his sermons, and how he preached a very startling one on this and that, &c.

FOR two days after the above conversation, good Mr. Longtext condescended to take no more notice of my presence at the rectory than if I had been as far off as the River St. Lawrence.

Jeremy, however, he distinguished highly; for the cunning rogue had him in leading strings as securely as ever mortal possessed another. His sly humour—his great good temper—and plastic disposition, by which he moulded himself to any variety of manner, soon won the con-

scientious rector, to say nothing of the constant repartee which he had ready for any one who addressed him.

In the mean time I had leisure to study the rector's character, and survey the neighbouring country. The latter was generally of considerable beauty; and of the former, any one who considers his actions, is as good a judge as myself.

One of the chief qualities on which he prided himself, was, I found, his determination. This, as is not unfrequent in such cases, he carried on to obstinacy, while simply believing it to be decision. With him to have arrived at a resolution, was, in part, to have executed it; and, when once you heard his favourite exclamation "I've said it," you knew there was no appeal. Whether in public or private, the field or the pulpit, it was the same.

His cousin, the squire, it seems, had half promised to bestow upon him a neighbouring piece of preferment, which was expected very shortly to fall vacant, and he was now very busy paying his court to him, and winning his way towards the plurality by desert.

In other words, as the squire loved hunting beyond all things, and a good dinner and a jovial glass next in comparison, the Reverend Mr. Longtext stuck close to him from morning to night in all three.

Still the squire was a man of far more information than is generally met in his station; for having been born originally as a younger brother, and educated for a struggle with the world, he came suddenly into the possession of the family estate with infinitely greater advantages than had been possessed by his predecessor.

Notwithstanding, then, all his acquired love for field-sports, he liked to hear a good sermon; carelessly imagining, that in this was comprised the whole duty of a parish priest.

Words from a pulpit, may indeed arouse the passions, or irritate the feelings, but they must be combined with the influence of, example, before they are at all likely to amend the heart. Still the squire's notion on this point, was not altogether unproductive of good.

Many a time and oft did he hint to his worthy kinsman that such and such a sermon had been heard before; that this text was exhausted and that argument had lost its novelty, while numbers of his oft-repeated discourses had now lost even the good quality of driving him to sleep.

Finding these gentle remonstrances ineffectual, he at last took to the happy expedient of drawing out his pencil in the church, and putting a note against every Sunday's text with an additional dot for each time of hearing, and the date of the offence. Nor was this all, as the rector always dined with him on Sunday, he delighted to seize the most inopportune moment of a dead pause in conversation, and then before a large circle, break forth with—

"A very fine discourse of yours this morning, Mr. Longtext—seems to be a great favourite with you—let me see," taking a little memorandum from his pocket, "you've given it to us six times within nineteen months."

"Indeed, sir," was all the answer Mr. Longtext would give—while the squire sticking his tongue in his cheek, would make some side remark, such as "Driven the old badger to earth, there, I take it!"

But the rector was not easily foiled, he caused to be bought up for him in London a quantity of sermon books at various old stalls, written by no one of note, and therefore little known; with these he was satisfied, contented man! to pair off the margins simply, and to transfer them to his black case. If in no other, still in this way displaying his charity by adopting the fatherless and the stranger.

Even here he was, notwithstanding, foiled, by his tormentor's advising him one day to get "his next batch of foundlings" of a smaller print, since he, the squire, could read the present very plainly from his seat in the gallery.

Perplexed and enraged to the last degree, yet unable or unwilling to conquer his own laziness or inaptitude, he now took to old manuscripts. This kind, though more expensive source, however, became to him a sealed up fountain by a most curious accident; for having bought a lot of what he supposed to be plain home-spun material, he went through some twenty or thirty of them with very great comfort.

Coming home late one Saturday night from hunting he contrived to oversleep himself in the morning, and snatching up the first sermon that lay on the top of his favourite pile, off he went: never thinking of reading it till he did so to his congregation.

It was a rash experiment for so prudent a gentleman, but fancying himself quite at home by this time in the style and ideas of his author, he troubled his head no far-

ther. And, talking of authors, let this be a warning how they attempt to play tricks with any of this never-sufficiently-to-be-respected fraternity—for as the Tories say of us Whigs, “They are very dangerous men.” And what sort of men then are the Tories, it may be asked? Ah! the rogues! they’ve put it out of our power to return any epithet of this kind to them—not happening to be men at all!—What are they then?—Old women!

But to resume our rector; the moment came for his text; and looking down to find it, he was alarmed to behold a hasty, crooked, crabbed, scrawl, in the place of that fine open hand, by means of which he had so often delighted himself and his auditors.

However this might be nothing, the text to be sure was not from a writer whose meaning he was particularly expert in expounding, but neither did that signify greatly to a country flock. It was a *sermon!* that was the main point to him!—So to proceed—

A very few lines, however, informed him that he was delivering matter perfectly at war with his own tenets, and still more with his own conduct. Instead of the comfortable opinions of your true orthodox man, he had got hold of some precious fulmination that was rankly Calvinistical.

How could this wretched thing have got there, thought he, distressed beyond measure, but go on he must; and thinking, after all, that his auditory might never know the difference, accordingly on he went.

Instead of his difficulties diminishing, they seemed to increase—long unintermitting sentences presented themselves without the least remorse, and it was very clear, that he had stumbled on a close, argumentative thesis of some stanch holder of ultra-evangelical opinions.

As the writer warmed too, with his subject, breaks and dashes came in without mercy—the writing grew more hurried and less distinct,—until suddenly, in the midst of a deduction from a well supported position, there came not the conclusion so naturally to be expected—but—an abrupt break, terminating in the figure “&c.”

In an instant, before he knew where he was, he got it out, “*et cetera*”—and then immediately, perceiving how extremely improper was the effect produced, he hemmed—stuttered—and finally read the passage over again. But if it seemed amiss at first, it was now doubly marked, and he was horrified—there it certainly was, “*et cetera*”

—yes, it was "*et cetera*"—and once more he got the confounded word out before he could tell what to do.

Thinking it best to pass it over, he read on a few lines farther—when lo! there stood another "&c." This he endeavoured to evade, by supplying the want of continuity from his own resources. Unaccustomed thus to draw upon them, however, the only point that he reached was that of converting all he had said into the most absolute nonsense.

Still he trusted that his assurance had carried him over the stile, and once more essayed the task. Alas! he was only a living example of the surety of punishment awaiting the transgressor; when, full in the middle of an important phrase, there came a third "&c." and a fourth almost close to it.

He now began to doubt the evidence of his own senses—drew out his spectacles—coughed—looked closely at the MS.—but there the provoking figure stood—it was neither more nor less than "*et cetera*." The position, as in the first case, had been laid down at length—but when the application should have followed, there stood "&c."

The original writer, evidently full of his subject, and anxious to complete his task, had hurried on to its termination, and writing his discourse perhaps a few hours before he delivered it, had trusted to his memory and extempore powers of reasoning to follow up his own idea by the clew thus given.

To Mr. Longtext this was impossible, and the awkwardness of his position may be imagined, when the halting portions of his discourse are read. They stood thus:—

"From what I have now briefly stated to you, you will see the imperative necessity of your taking care of your &c.,—or if madly bent upon following up your own perverse inclinations, you will find the inevitable result to be &c., &c."

"We of the orthodoxy," thought Mr. Longtext, "don't argue in this way," and turning over the next leaf, there were nine more of his relentless foes, all mustered ready for the attack, within almost as many lines.

Shutting his book, with the despair of a man who feels himself irretrievably lost, he brought the service to the best conclusion in his power; and retired to the vestry under a firm conviction of having that day received, from accident, a far severer lesson on the negligent perform-

ance of his duties, than design could possibly have given him.

At the hour of dinner, he did not dare to show himself at his cousin's table, and the story getting buzzed among the better informed of his neighbours, obtained for him the well-deserved soubriquet of Parson Etcetera.

Driven from each expedient which he had adopted, it was now, in this extremity, it occurred to him to advertise for some one who would execute the required performances under his own eye,—and I was the happy individual selected.

When Jeremy detailed to me these particulars, obtained with others, I could not but smile at the pretended self-sufficiency of the worthy rector, with whom I did not doubt that I should be much amused; while, as to his feeling the necessity of retaining me, I had not any fears.

Jeremy also told me that when he had ventured to deliver his own compositions, they were always remarkable for hitting no one so hard as himself—that is, where they hit any mark at all; though it seemed to be confessed that the last was a fault of which he was not too frequently accused, since for his happy powers, he generally took the most incomprehensible text he could find. Nothing was a more favourite subject with him than that of controversies, those in particular relating to the church of Laodicea in St. John, or half a chapter from the Hebrews, or indeed any thing that possessed the superior advantage of being the most remote from human failings and human duties.

At the same time, strange to say, if it was possible to drag in any reprehensive of his own line of conduct, there it was sure to come, either by quotation or remark—though nothing was ever farther from his thoughts than the horrid vice of self-humiliation.

I could illustrate this at once were I to quote passages, but this is unnecessary. Such, then, were the faults and foibles of the worthy rector—numerous and considerable in any station, but highly reprehensible in his; and yet withal I was informed that, however wanting in the other relations of life, he still made a very good son to an aged parent.

Saturday at last came round, and proved me right in my conjectures, as to retention in the rector's service. Having up to this time always enjoyed my meals alone

and in his library, he entered on the morning in question, and desiring my attention, proceeded to inform me, with no slight pomp, that I might henceforth consider myself his private secretary.

It would appear that he had endured no slight struggle with his pride as to whether he should indulge mine; but having once persuaded himself to give way, it was evident, as is usually the case, that I had risen in his estimation, from the circumstance. In this interview he was far more confidential, and even attempted some justification for employing me, though this he did but very lamely. Proceeding to inform me of the various duties I was to perform, he allowed me at once to understand, that in all points of fact I was to be the rector, while in matters of honour and profit he bore the burden.

This I was to write—that I was to copy—such a correspondence I was to undertake—these books I was to keep up—and from such registers to extract, and so on. In short, if I had a moment idle in the day, it was not my fault; and all this the honest rector was to have for board and lodging.

Thou art a liberal soul! thought I, and if any man doubts it, refer him to me. Still I did not regret the constant employment thus afforded; it was something new, and therefore pleasant, to say nothing of my being brought into habits more like those of business than I might ever otherwise have obtained. I again, always having recourse to my secretary, whenever anxious to get through any particular task; for such was that Jeremy's indefatigable industry, that impose upon him what duties you would, they seemed no more than oil upon the ocean.

My first labour was to get ready the morrow's sermons: one of these being already finished, I soon accomplished the other; and on the ensuing day, I had, as Mr. Longtext termed it, "the satisfaction of hearing them delivered to his flock;" and to the boot of that, at the end of the forenoon service, some noble personage, who happened to be staying with one of the families, walked up to the eloquent preacher, and begging to borrow the discourse he had just heard, proceeded to make him a very handsome compliment on its composition.

"I beg, my lord, I beg that you don't mention it," returned the modest orator, in a would-be deprecating strain; and drawing very complacently his black case from his pocket, he took out my thesis, and delivered it to his

lordship, with as much bashfulness as if it had been his own.

"Every thing depends on the delivery of a sermon, Mr. Wortley," complacently remarked the rector, as we entered his door together.

"Yes, sir, infinitely more than the writing," said I, intending to quiz him.

"True, sir, true!" replied he, with all the innocence of a babe; "I've known many a good sermon marred in the reading."

"And mine was one of them!" I was about to add, but thinking that this was as well reserved for another day, I bowed my head in token of any thing for which he might choose to take it, and the worthy gentleman went to solace himself with a nap after the fatigues of the day.

"Mr. Wortley," said he, pausing on his way up stairs, with a most important air——

"Sir?" said I, all attention.——

"Let me be called as soon as luncheon's ready."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Which I suspect you would find very witty—if brevity alone were the soul of wit. Whence I conclude that Wit—the lucky rascal—has two souls. Hence his great superiority on earth. And he who rightly defines his other soul is a wittier fellow than Wortley Montague.

In this manner three weeks had now passed. As Jeremy had prophesied, we heard nothing farther of the reference, although he had managed to send notice to his accommodating friends of the demand about to be made on them.

Seeing that I contrived very effectually to relieve the conscientious rector from the onerous duties of his parish, he grew more social, and I in return softened towards him.

Creature of change as I am, the novelty of my present life was already beginning to wear off, and I was thinking as to when and how I should once more change it, when a circumstance occurred to give it a new phase.

Annexed to the living of Parson Longtext, was a chapel of ease, or small cure, called Fairyvale, the duty of which was performed in a beautiful little church, at some short distance from the rectory.

I had seen the spot once or twice in passing, and had often intended to go and inspect it more minutely—laziness and whim of one sort and another, had deterred me hitherto; and now, one sunny afternoon, I found myself strolling towards it, with Jeremy the Honest for my companion.

As both of us had dined, and a very lovely prospect lay before us, we indulged as we walked onward in that strain of semi-serious philosophy in which we mutually delighted. It was such an evening as inclines the heart of man to be at peace with all our fellow-creatures. I could not help feeling how insensibly I had become attached to the odd fellow. Despite of all my misanthropic sentiments, there is something strangely at variance between my heart and lips. For even while these are whispering the prudence of suspicion and distrust, that prompts but to confidence, and lives but on affection. There is something infectious in kindness, and after all, on looking back—I doubt whether he is not a happier man whose stony bosom has placed him beyond the treachery of its soft contagion.

"Jeremy," said I suddenly, "did you ever happen in your life to meet with any man that hated you?"

Jeremy paused—with an air of surprise—"That is a very singular question, sir," said he, "but, on reflection, I do not think I ever did."

"Well, that's odd too, for such a professed rogue! Who would not cultivate soft manners, and an even tongue, when such is their influence? Jeremy, by the by,—of how much money have you robbed me since our acquaintance? For it was thus, you know, that you were to take your wages."

"Alas, your worship, I have forgotten hire in your service, for it has bound me with chains stronger than of gold."

"Jeremy," said I, "you have kept the farce up sufficiently long; but do not think that it has deceived me; that answer, like many more that I have heard from the same quarter, was engendered neither on the plains of Dartmoor, nor the deanery kitchens of Exeter, nor the hermit's cell in Surrey. You told me an odd story of your adven-

tures, but I have seen how ready is your invention. Your language, your thoughts, many things are at variance with your tale. I am sure the actual truth would be infinitely more amusing—tell me truly now, who and what you are? Come, do satisfy my curiosity.”

“If you want me to leave you, sir, you will repeat the doubts you have now expressed,” replied my companion in a low and agitated tone, looking steadfastly upon the ground; “but if you are satisfied with my services, you will for ever confine to your own bosom the wish to inquire any farther than you already know. I think I have not erred in supposing you to feel, with me, that suffering is sacred, even though it should be the suffering of folly or of guilt.”

This singular reply silenced me at once; and lost in wonder, and begging his pardon for an unwarrantable, an unintentional intrusion, we walked on in silence. For some few minutes I could not recover from the feeling of surprise at this odd conversation which had so suddenly sprung up between us, and before I could recollect myself, Jeremy begged me to excuse his returning to the rectory.

“You’re not going to leave me, surely, Jeremy?” said I in alarm, placing my hand upon his shoulder. “No, sir,” replied he, mildly, and I saw something very like a tear in his eye as he muttered some excuse. Begging his pardon once more at having disturbed his tranquillity, by my thoughtless curiosity, I allowed him to turn back and walked on.

But my buoyancy of spirit had fled, and turning into a thick wood which lay between me and the little church of Fairyvale, I sought the gloom congenial to the train of thought, thus suddenly called into existence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Displays rather a different picture of the clerical character.

TURNING away from Jeremy, after rambling for some short time, I also directed my steps towards the rectory, and in the court-yard met Thomas.

"Thomas," said I, "does the route to widow Ryan's lie across that hill?"

"No, bless ye, no," replied Mr. Thomas, for like a true butler he scorned to say sir or use any epithet of respect to one who was only a dependant on his master; "the widow's cottage is down at the bottom of the hanging wood behind yonder valley."

"Then where has your master gone?—I thought he was to see the widow this morning?"

"Ay, so he was, but he hadn't time—didn't you see the squire come riding by?—they've both gone straight to cover."

"And how was the widow when you called last night?—dying, I suppose?"

"How was she?—why, bless ye, I wasn't going out of my way to see her at that time o' night, just for one of master's whimsies—I sent the message on by the boy that belongs to the errand cart, who said that if he went up that way in the morning, he'd try and deliver it,—As for dying, it's like enough they've got that matter comfortably over by this time, for they've been long enough about it, whether or no."

And are these *men*, thought I?—Such is the influence of example in those above us, and this in the household of one, the whole aim and end of whose life is to preach the doctrines of a never tiring and universal charity. Turning upon my heel, I at once sought the wood which had been pointed out to me. Well, thought I, with all my follies and my vices, I never was in a position that threw them so completely in the shade.

It is not the flagrant crime by which society is hurt,—the deed that grossly violates the law, entails itself a heavy punishment upon its author; but the unceasing per-

petration of petty evils—the continued neglect of the trivial but soothing duties of life—these disgust us with our kind, and outraging the best feelings of the truly good, bring them first to tolerate, and then participate in those vices which are the more abhorrent, as they are the less amenable. Hence springs that hollow insincerity of heart that renders the world a peopled wilderness, and life itself almost insupportable.

Walking on with a quick and uneven step, I soon reached the wood, and seeing no one of whom I might ask direction, pushed on in hopes of finding out the object of my search by the description I had already received.

After proceeding about half a mile, I came to the brow of a hill, and looking down over the tops of the trees that clothed the descent, beheld a little stream winding its way along a sedgy bottom.

On the other side the wood rose again to a still greater height, and seemed to spring from the very margin of those gentle waters, which purled away through many a sinuous course; now lost to sight, and now peeping out to view until they became finally merged in the blue and hazy distance.

Directly opposite to me, and raised on a rude terrace by the streamlet's brink, appeared a sweet little cottage. Numbers of the later roses of the year climbed over an humble trellis-work, and reaching its thatched roof, there disported themselves in all the freedom of wild beauty.

A small garden, bearing the traces of past care and present neglect, stretched down into the brook, which impatiently gurgled past one or two stepping stones, placed there for the purpose of washing clothes. A range of beehives still stood upon their stalls, and from the chimney top slowly curled up a thin azure wreath of smoke, undisturbed by the slightest breath of air, and stealing towards heaven like the grateful orisons of an humble heart.

Transported with this exquisite little bit of nature, I watched the vapour winding among the many varied hues of the forest; the foliage of which was sparkling with dew drops that reflected the early sun-beam. "And can the world's care or sorrow reach here?" said I to myself. Filled with thoughts which I will not profane by attempting to describe, I turned about and proceeded on my path.

Gradually descending the hill, I soon gained a bridge of plank, overarched by a luxurious hedge of laurel, but

hardly had I proceeded another step, when my ear distinguished the voice of some one in distress, and a sudden turn of the road brought me upon a little girl, who might have been ten years old, and who was seated upon the decayed trunk of a tree, and weeping bitterly.

It was as pretty a face as you might wish to see, and the griefs of childhood have a power to touch the heart beyond all the images of the pleader's art.

"What is the matter, my little one," said I, but she scarcely answered me a word, and taking the little creature in my arms, and kissing away the tears from her clean and ruddy cheek, I pressed the babe to my bosom and repeated the question. "My mother, sir, is dying!" sobbed the little soul, as though her heart would break, "and they say I shall never see her more!"

"And where's your father, then, my little darling?" demanded I, as well as I was able.

"I have no father, sir, nor any one but mother," and looking in my face, with an agony of expression that denied all farther words, she burst out into tears afresh. Seating myself upon the withered tree, I endeavoured to compose her griefs; but, alas! I only shared them; and, asking presently where I might find her mother, she pointed to the cottage I had been so lately admiring.

"Is your mother's name Regan, my little cherub?" "Yes," sobbed the child.

"And why are you not by your mother's bed-side?" "I have been there all night, sir, but Miss Mary is reading to her now: she told me that my crying disturbed them, and that if I would go away for a little while, she might be better by the time I returned."

"Poor little mourner," thought I, "well may you watch! Nature is not yet sufficiently contaminated in your bosom, to permit your slumbering over the death-bed of another, in such circumstances;—that happy insensibility was reserved for a pampered child of wealth."

Telling the little soul to wait for my return, I stole towards the cottage, and peeping through the clustering roses that mantled round one of the windows, I beheld a sight I could not easily forget.

In a corner of the room, which not even the approach of death had disturbed from the cleanly order that seemed natural to it, stood the bed; on its pillow reposed the face of the dying woman. Around her were kneeling several poor people, all of the same sex, apparently her neigh-

bours; while a sunbeam stealing through the casement lit upon the head of one who, in this scene of sorrow, did indeed appear an angel of light.

She was a slight fair girl, apparently not more than eighteen. She knelt close by the side of the sufferer, and with her hand lifted up to heaven, was supplicating, with the gentlest voice, for that mercy in behalf of sin, which one so pure could scarcely be thought to require for herself, nor to ask in vain for another.

Irradiated as those features now appeared by the light that streamed upon them from without, and the holy glow of enthusiasm that lighted them from within, sure nothing earthly was ever half so beautiful before.

Holding my breath that I might more distinctly catch the silvery sweetness of her voice, a pang seemed to shoot across my bosom when it ceased; and rising from her humble posture, after a slight pause, she took within her hands those of the poor woman on whom her tenderness was bestowed;—a slight exclamation escaped her as she did so, and stooping to examine her features, she gently turned the linen over the yet warm face. How much did that simple act bespeak—the last dark finish of our human ills—the first bright step towards the joys of eternity! Overcome by the scene, she sank into a chair.—All then was over!

I saw no more of what passed in the room—I heard nothing of what was said—I seemed suddenly to have neither feeling nor notice for aught but one who seemed so tenderly to act at once the saddest and the kindest part which one poor mortal can perform for another!

Feeling that with such a heart there was a bond of love, and understanding uniting it to all of better feeling, I waited for a few minutes, and then entering among those whom death had visited but not dismayed, at once explained that I had come down from the rectory, in the absence of Mr. Longtext, to see if I could be of service—expressing, at the same time, my joy at having been so well anticipated.

Thanking me for my intentions, as much as if herself had been their object, the lovely ministrant disclaimed with a touching modesty the merit I had assigned, and told me, but only with a sigh, that I was too late. “I know it,” said I, pointing to the window where I had stood.

Understanding, at once, that she had been overlooked,

a glow of confusion mantled on the cheek that had evidently been worn by watching and fatigue.

Fearful to a degree that I had never before experienced, of having given offence where I least wished to do so, I was about to say something though I scarce knew what, but rising from her seat she remarked it was time for her to return home. She now gave some directions to the neighbours, and inquiring for the little girl, said she would take her to her father's. On hearing this, I told her where her intended charge might be found, and we left the cottage together.

Having found the object of our search, the poor little thing asked for her mother, and finding her benefactress unable to answer for her tears, was about to start off for the cottage, when my young acquaintance retained her on the way and endeavoured to lift her in her arms.

Too weak for this effort, she tottered to one side of the road and but for me would have fallen.

Taking in one arm the child, who bitterly implored to see her parent, and giving the other to the kind friend who had lately tended her, I asked whither she would go. She pointed to the path that lay before us, and winding up the hill to the right of the desolated cottage, and quieting as well as we could the grief of the young orphan, we proceeded in silence on our way.

On reaching the hill above the wood, the breeze from which we had hitherto been sheltered now came fresh and delightfully upon us, and endeavouring to turn our thoughts from the scene below we soon entered into conversation.

It now appeared that my fair companion was the Mary of whom the little child had spoken. That she was the daughter of Mr. Plaine, a curate of the rector, to which office was attached the duties of the little church, called Fairyvale. This curacy, I learnt from her, was one of great labour, and truth to say, most scanty pay, the last amounting to little more than sixty-five pounds a-year.

To earn this miserable pittance her father had first to attend throughout the week to the whole sick and poor of a parish seven miles in extent. On Sunday his first duty was to read the service and preach the sermon at his own church—of ease; and in the afternoon to repeat this at the rector's. Finally, he had to return to Fairyvale, go through the evening service, and deliver a lecture—a practice at that time not common—as a whet for all which,

he had at nine o'clock in the morning to hear some fifty charity-school girls spell through their lessons.

On remarking on the shocking disparity of duty, between the curate who had sixty-five pounds a-year and the rector who had eight hundred, my companion meekly replied that she supposed it was all proper, since the rector enjoyed a family living, which had been given to him, but that her father's only claim to emolument was by the services which he might be able to perform.

Little did she know that she was thus innocently pronouncing on the system, the bitterest condemnation that it could receive.

In explanation of the circumstances under which we had met, she told me that late last night, after retiring to bed, a message had come to her father, from the poor widow, praying him to come and attend her in her last moments. Being exceedingly ill himself of a rheumatic fever, he had of course been unable to leave his bed, but had allowed his only child to act in his behalf, since she was frequently in the habit of reading to such of her poor neighbours as might desire her services.

Coming across a common, however, which lay between Fairyvale and the widow's cottage, herself and guide had been overtaken in a violent shower of rain, and drenched to the skin; and indeed she looked fatigued to the last degree; but this she ascribed to sitting up the two preceding nights with her father, of whom she spoke with an affectionate warmth and solicitude which would have pleaded strongly in her behalf with any one, though there had been nothing else to recommend her.

As it was, my blood boiled within me to think that while master Longtext was rolling his fat sides on eider down, and surrounded with every species of Epicurean luxury, this poor and lovely creature was exposed to the merciless blastings of the storm in discharge of that very duty which it should have been as much his delight as it certainly was his office to perform.

On sounding her, however, as to what her opinions might be on this head, and how it was that the rector did not discharge this piece of duty—her answer, though cautious in the extreme, still very plainly showed me that his character was fully understood in the parish—that this was not his first dereliction, and that in short every one pretty well knew the hopelessness of applying to him.

Contrasting this with the admirable opinion which he

seemed to entertain of himself and his own deserts, I could not help reflecting on the horrible delusions which men's minds will often put upon them, and pitying an establishment which had to support so sacred a character by the aid of dignitaries too often such as these.

We had now reached the parsonage of Fairryvale. It was a low and unpretending building, and well suited to the humble fortune of its occupants. Still every thing around bore testimony to the superintending hand of a neat and careful taste. Small as was the garden, cultivation had done all that its size would permit.

Every thing spoke of order and regularity, nearly all the flowers of the season lent their beauty to adorn it; and not a weed was to be seen. With a native grace infinitely beyond the freezing civility of artificial polish, its young mistress did the honours of her house; for she too had lost her mother. In the most cordial manner she invited me to walk in and partake of breakfast; premising that her father's frugal board had nothing to recommend it but a sincere welcome.

"And the best of attractions," said I, "though I think too there is another which it possesses, that few can surpass."

Wild flower as she was, this little compliment seemed rather to alarm than gratify her, and entering the quiet parsonage, we found the meal already set forth upon the table. Having retired for awhile, to see to the wants of her parent and to change her dress, she came back with a message, desiring his kind thanks to me for my effort to be of service to one of his parishioners, and that for his own part he accepted with pleasure the offer I had sent up to him by his daughter, of paying my respects at his bed-side after breakfast.

In the singular and chequered life which I have led, I have been present at not a few of the *déjeunés* which gaudy pomp and ostentatious wealth have spread; but never, under any circumstances, did I ever feel such a thrill of pleasure and unmixed satisfaction as reigned in my bosom during that short hour.

The beauty of my new acquaintance was to me of a kind altogether superior and new. I had hitherto been accustomed to prize that which was rather of a voluptuous than an intellectual cast, but Mary's was wholly of the latter.

With every new gaze, some fresh charm seemed to un-

fold—some yet more attractive cast of expression seemed to arise—the meekest, loveliest countenance it was, that ever crossed my sight! Just such a face as Charity herself would have assumed, if any thing could tempt her to embody herself for the enchantment and delight of man.

To this was added the joy of feeling that I owed the delight of the present moment, to an act which not even my own conscience—that severest but neglected monitor—could condemn.

Seated thus *tête-à-tête*, we entered into a long conversation relating to the parish in which we were now, I hoped, both residents; and after a considerable space, too briefly passed, Mr. Plaine sent down his compliments, with a message that he should be most happy to see me; and his daughter having shown me his room, withdrew.

I fear that the worthy clergyman, by whose side I was now found sitting, must have found me but an indifferent visiter; for though absent from my sight, I could not easily detach from my thoughts that object on which for the last two hours they had been dwelling.

Parson Plaine was just such a being as I had expected to find the parent of his daughter. A mild, unassuming, benevolent old man. I say old, for though not more than two or three and fifty, his hair, from causes which I could easily imagine, had nearly all turned gray, and his features bore the stamp of a resigned, melancholy, and premature age.

Sorrow rarely finds a heart predisposed to sympathy that it does not unburden its own bosom by confidence, and I soon learnt that he had been twice a widower, and in a short space of time had lost three children. One son had died at sea, another at school, and not many years since, his eldest daughter, he told me, with a degree of anguish that made my heart bleed for him, had expired in the next room to that in which we then were.

With all his meekness, his face wore a look of bright intelligence, and I loved him from the moment that he told me this sad story. Who that has suffered deeply himself can hear the sorrows of another and not be moved! His features were pinched and thin, but he had the same lustrous eyes and singularly arched nostril that constituted so much of the beauty of his daughter's face. When admiring these peculiarities of feature, little did I think of what they spoke, but the experience of a brief space brought the sad conviction too truly home to me.

Seeing this conversation distressed and excited him, I turned our discourse upon parish affairs, and he seemed not a little astounded on learning the circumstances which made me his neighbour. With great kindness, however, he advised me to remain silent on this head, if I had any wish of remaining at the rectory, and supposing me to be as poor and friendless as I appeared, he naturally concluded that such was my desire.

Of his rector he spoke with more tenderness and compassion, if it were possible, than that used by his daughter, remarking with the charity of a true Christian, that riches were a great snare, from the temptation of which he ought to thank God he had been spared.

"If I have only strength to work, sir," said he in conclusion, "and am spared to see my dear Mary secured from want, shall I not have great reason to be thankful?"

I said nothing, for the idea of want, connected with the name of the amiable creature I had this morning seen for the first time, struck me as a thing too horrible to be for a moment entertained; and I internally vowed that a total freedom from that at least, he should have the pleasure of seeing.

But O! mortality! richly is punishment deserved by those who, blind to the events of even the next hour, can presume to interpret the futurity of distant years.

Thinking that my farther presence might now be wearying this good man, I was about to withdraw, but detaining me by the hand, he kindly said that the little he had seen of me induced him to ask what might seem to be too great a favour, but if so, I must allow the helplessness of a sick man to plead for him.

Telling him that his request would give me the greatest pleasure in farthering, he pointed with a smile to a table near at hand, and begged me "to read him a few pages from that book; for," said he, "my daughter has been constant in her attendance upon me for the last fortnight, and I am fearful of requiring more at her hands than a delicate state of frame will sanction."

Opening with alacrity the volume thus pointed out, I found it was the bible; from which, for the next hour, I read such portions as he desired.

Thanking me again and again for these little attentions, he pressed me to stay and partake of an humble dinner, which I thought it advisable to decline, and therefore took my leave; having received a warm and most pressing in-

vation, to call and see him again as soon as I could afford time.

This, in my own mind, you may be sure, I fixed at no very distant period. On inquiring below stairs for Miss Plaine, I found that she had retired to take some slight rest; and, as I would by no means permit her to be disturbed, I could only offer the sincere but silent wishes of my heart for the welfare of so amiable a being, and depart.

"May I not, in after times," said I, pausing for an instant on its threshold; "may I not in after years, have cause to bless the accident that brought me first to Fairyvale?"—"You will! you will!"—whispered my too confiding heart, and breathing my prayers for the eternal happiness of its inmates, it was in no unpleasing reverie I recrossed its smiling garden, and bent my pensive steps towards the rectory.

CHAPTER XXV.

Treats of the hospitality of the prop of the Church.

THE illness of Mr. Plaine preventing him of course from doing duty, I naturally supposed, that for once, Mr. Longtext might, by performing both services, exert himself a little beyond his ordinary custom.

But this, it seems, he considered himself to have done already, as he told me, on coming down to luncheon, "that reading another man's writing was very hard work."

As he rubbed his eyes not a little, while delivering this opinion, "perhaps, sir," said I, "you've not had sleep enough?"

"Why, thank you, Mr. Wortley," replied he, most unsuspecting of any banter, "I had a pretty fair portion of rest last night,—but, hark! was that a ring at the bell?"

"I think it was, sir," said I,

In another moment, Thomas entered: "Please, sir; here's the person come to do duty for Mr. Plaine."

"Oh! ah!—very well;—tell him, Thomas, he'll find every thing in—the vestry. Luckily the bell's very nearly done tolling."

This last part of his reply, the rector muttered as a soliloquy, being busily engaged at the same moment in picking the leg of a cold fowl.

Thomas, having closed the door, retired with this message, and presently I saw a meek, venerable, old gentleman in a suit of long-worn black, pass out from the rectory, and crossing over the intervening green, enter the church by the vestry-door.

"Mr. Wortley," said the rector, suddenly recalling me from a meditative ramble, "You will go to church this afternoon, and therefore you had better get ready at once; and now I think of it, it is as well to caution you always to be early in your pew. Connected as you are with one in my situation, good example, you know, Mr. Wortley, is of the first importance."

I rose,—“Bless me!” added Mr. Longtext, “the bell is about to cease already—you'd better be quick!—don't wait for me—I can't go this afternoon—I've got a severe headach.” And the reverend gentleman filled up at the same time his third bumper of old Madeira.

After this well-timed exordium, I could not but be all obedience.

If the aspect of the officiating clergyman had before prejudiced me in his favour, his mode of doing duty did not lessen this feeling, and I determined to be better acquainted with him. Making the best of my way towards the vestry as soon as the congregation were dismissed, I perceived the stranger busy in talking to some poor woman, and unwilling therefore to intrude, I walked into the churchyard, intending to accost him as he came out, and occupying myself till then in reading over a few of the epitaphs.

Insensibly forgetting myself in this amusement, I turned about in a few minutes, but only to find the vestry, and the church both closed. I of course concluded that the clergyman had gone into the rectory, and directing my steps thither, I demanded if the clergyman who had preached was not in the parlour.

“Why, what should he do there?” demanded Mr. Thomas, who had opened the door.

"Why, surely he takes some refreshment with the rector."

"I should think not," replied the worthy butler.—
"Master knows better what to do with his table, than to put the like of them to it."

"The like of them,—what do you mean?" said I, bridling my anger,—
"who is this poor gentleman?"

"Lor, how should I know? he's one of them ere 'ack parsons that go about the country preaching for a livelihood."

"Then by your account, he must have come from a distance, and surely this is a double reason why some hospitality should be shown him."

"As to that, I know nothing of such matters—that's Mr. Plaine's look out, not master's. I tell you he never has them sort of people to his table,—only gentlemen;" and the humble menial favoured me with a look as much as to say, that part of this refined sarcasm was levelled at me.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Thomas," said I, "you speak the truth, no doubt, and where do you think then this 'ack parson may be found?"

"You'd better ask the clerk—he won't show his nose here, I'll take care; and as for master, you know very well, he's gone up to the squire's."

"Why, I thought a severe headach was keeping him at home?"

"Yes, from the noise of church; but the squire's is a different sort of thing."

Doubtless, thought I,—and putting on my hat once more, I recrossed the green to inquire at the house of the clerk for one who had enjoyed such a specimen of a rich rector's polite liberality. I now learned that the poor old gentleman's name was Temple, and that he had quitted the church within a few seconds of myself, and taken his solitary way to Fairyvale. As my dinner had been served just before the hour of service, I determined on trying to overtake him; and meeting with Jeremy on my way, we proceeded quickly, but in silence, on our path.

As I recalled the meek and venerable features of the aged preacher, my heart bled within me to think, what and how bitter might be the feelings of his heart at the inhospitable treatment he had received from a brother of his own sacred order, and a younger brother too! If any thing makes the blood to boil, it is to witness unkindness wan-

tonly offered to childhood or to age. It seems scarcely possible to imagine that breast on which either the one or the other has not the most imperative claim for the best sympathies of the heart, our love and our respect.

To witness a man afflicted at once with years and with misfortune, is, perhaps, the most affecting sight that misery can present to interest the more favoured of mankind. Yet, alas! how many of the sons of affluence daily behold it, unpitying and unmoved!

Would your carriage roll less easily for an occasional crown dropped from its window? or your sleep be less secure at night from having scattered in the morning some crumbs of bread upon the waters, to stay the pangs of famine or sooth the frenzies of despair?

An hour might come when trifles such as these would prove the sweetest actions of a life;—when rank and wealth no longer carry weight, when fashion cannot support, nor even folly any longer entice, the being whom example and gregarious vice had dazzled, might find himself left alone,—hurried from a world with which every feeling was bound up, and unable to avail himself for the future of a single advantage he had ever possessed. Weighed down by self-reproach, now heard for the first time, what value would he not place on those trivial kindnesses, which would then be pleading for him in a quarter, where he could not reasonably ask a hearing for any supplications of his own!

CHAPTER XXVI.

Which shows that it is by no means necessary to command wealth in order to possess charity, since this is a virtue not more the duty than it may be the luxury even of the poorest.

HAVING proceeded in silence as far as the cottage of the deceased widow, the exclamation of Jeremy, who had not yet had a sight of it, and was ignorant of the melancholy story relating to its late tenant, detained us for a few minutes on the brow of the hanging wood.

After he had sufficiently admired its beauty and situa-

tion, I related to him the scene I had there witnessed, and discoursing on the subjects thus introduced, we soon arrived at Fairyvale.

Much as he now was prepossessed in favour of its simple and warm-hearted inhabitants, still the great neatness which decked the poverty of the curate's humble dwelling with charms that the richer rectory could not display, made him pause an instant at the gate to look around.

In the midst of some remark however the door was unlatched, and Mary herself appeared with a message of welcome from her father. She soon told me, with looks of extreme pleasure, that he had, for the first time, been able to come down stairs that day, and having caught sight of us already from his seat by the fire-side, had sent her out to secure our entrance.

Assuring her that there was as little fear as wish to escape from such a guardian, we shook hands with all the warmth of friends of an older date, and she led me towards the parlour. On our way we consigned Jeremy to the care of an old man, who acted in the double capacity of gardener to the curate, and also to the churchyard. As these walked off to the left, I took the liberty of peeping in that direction, and beheld five or six poor people gathered round the kitchen fire, having before them a table, and what I afterwards learned to be some good home-brewed beer, together with a few pipes.

The goodly fumes of the soothing weed were, I observed, very industriously circulated by various members of the party; one of whom was an old beggar, who had gained a night's lodging for the asking; another, a worn-out sailor, who having wandered into church in the morning, had come to the kitchen dinner by the invitation of the gardener, and was now indulging his auditors with a narrative of the battle in which he lost his leg, under the famous Sir George Rooke, at Malaga.

Concluding that Jeremy would not find himself far out of his reckoning even in this humble society, I passed on, and following my fair guide, entered the parlour. In an easy chair sat the good curate, Mr. Plaine, well wrapped up. He welcomed me with all the kindness of a sincere heart, and introduced me as the rector's secretary to several honest farmer-like looking people, who, with my friend the minister of the morning, were sitting near him at the tea table.

Having risen on my entrance, they now made way for me to join their circle, while Mary resuming her seat, poured me out a dish of tea. It is not voluptuousness, thought I, which spreads the daintiest feast—the cheer that is blessed by love is sweeter than the riches of the bee.

If in the morning I had admired the 'ack parson, this impression was not lessened by the kind humility with which he seconded Mr. Plaine in promoting the cheerfulness of his guests, who, as I had supposed, were several of them neighbouring farmers, first attracted to the curate by respect for his station, and now long attached by mutual regard.

Unbending a mind not ill-fitted for the higher knowledge of his profession, which, when its duties are properly performed, is truly god-like in its character, he seemed by turns to enter into all their feelings and their wishes. Now the prospects of one attracted his attention, and now the family of another shared his regard. Some domestic calamity of a third called forth his consolation, or the temporal fears of a fourth excited him to inspired hope; a fifth asked him his advice, and a sixth for some particular piece of information.

With the history and affairs of each he seemed equally at home, and one who, from the good example of practising all he preached, had become not more the pastor than the friend of all. Tea being removed, his daughter was requested to sing a hymn, which she did with equal taste and good feeling, accompanying herself on the lute, nor requiring to be asked a second time, and only excusing the hoarseness of her voice, which she said was the result of a slight cold. I now more than ever had occasion to admire the sweetness and great flexibility of those tones which I had first heard under such solemn circumstances. Still I could not help noticing with regret that her cold scarcely seemed so light as she was inclined to hold it, and once or twice during the evening I observed her suppressing an inclination to cough.

The party now ranging themselves round the fire, a conversation suitable to the day ensued, and Mary taking on her knee the little orphan whose mother had that day been committed to the last refuge of the unfortunate, endeavoured to keep it from falling asleep. Finding this in vain, she withdrew to put it to bed, but hardly had she left the room when the old sexton made his ap-

pearance with a letter for the curate, which the post-boy had just brought.

Having gone through this epistle with evident signs of agitation, he laid it down before him, remarking to us that it contained a striking proof of how much misery one act too often entailed. This remark naturally excited in his hearers a wish for farther information, he handed the letter over to his brother clergyman to be read aloud.

It certainly was not a communication, that could have been received without emotion, by any one possessed of common feeling; and came from some gentleman in Dublin, who signed himself "Charles." It was not addressed to Mr. Plaine personally, but simply to the officiating clergyman of the parish, whose assistance he begged in a case of the most touching distress which had come under his notice.

"I do not make any demands upon your purse," proceeded the writer, "I am but too well aware how numerous are the claims generally existing on all in your station, and how little that station fits its occupants to bear them. But fortunately in this world no good heart is utterly without the means of being useful. The woes of the unhappy, and even the vices of the unprincipled, may almost invariably be soothed or amended by feeling there are yet those who will care for them.

"Sympathy by exciting the miserable to strive for themselves, often effects more real good, than that substantial assistance which renders self aid unneeded—While virtue has no voice so powerful or so sweet, to call a wanderer back, as that of pity from one who has never strayed.

"Under these circumstances, can I believe it possible that I shall appeal to you, sir, in vain?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Mr. Plaine in a low voice, turning away his face toward the fire.

The clergyman held up the letter which he had laid upon his knee for a moment, and proceeded. "The case in which I would interest you is that of Charlotte Robins——"

"Charlotte Robins!" exclaimed two or three voices in accents of pity and surprise. "Charlotte Robins," resumed the clergyman, proceeding once more with the letter, "who I am informed is the daughter of a respectable farmer in your parish.

"I am aware that her case is but that of hundreds who daily perish the early and unpitied victims of crime, in

which their share is too often less of the guilty than the unfortunate. But the frequency of the evil, so far from hardening our compassion, should but heighten our anxiety to relieve some, at least, of such numerous sufferers. If the poor girl has told her tale correctly, it is one with which you must be in some degree acquainted—should you not at first recognise it, you will find, on inquiry, that a regiment having been quartered in your neighbourhood, the subject of my letter was induced by one of its officers to leave her home, and accompany him to Cork. From this town, in a few months, he was ordered to the West Indies, to which distant quarter he sailed suddenly, and left her behind him, penniless in fortune, blasted in character, and heart-broken in spirits; leaving her just so much of virtue as might make her incessantly miserable, but utterly deprived of that portion which was absolutely necessary to her existence. In the utmost distress, she now wrote three successive letters to her parents, but these having never been answered, she could only conclude that they left her to her own despair.

“Possessed of no friend to comfort, or even to advise her, without a resource on which to fall back, and only the lowest degradation and infamy on which to advance—fancy this poor creature’s agony!

“An unversèd rustic, and in the midst of a large metropolis—a cold and un pitying world without, with unceasing torment and reproach within; distress and want for the present, joy and comfort forfeited for the past, ruin and destruction for the future.

“Heaven! did it need that to all these pangs, should be added the poignancy of an unhappy affection, not yet subdued, even by desertion—the fears of a mother for an offspring still unborn, with all the bitterness of a child spurned from the bosom that once gave it milk?

“Such, sir, was the state of misery in which accident discovered to me the subject of my present application.

“Did I not draw the sad portrait from Nature, I could not fancy such an accumulation of ills could wait on one poor being. The child has since died of want! and had not timely assistance found her, the mother must have followed.

“Her anguish of mind I cannot describe; but if you have a heart, it is not difficult to be imagined, and I think it will not need my request to induce you to wait upon the father of this unhappy girl, and lay before him the

iniquity of refusing to receive one, whose greatest anxiety on earth is at once to return to that path of life which she now perceives the utter madness of ever having been tempted to leave.

"The arguments, which, speaking in a moral point of view, bind him to this line of conduct, I need not point out to you—but paint to him a poor creature in the position I have related—tell him to fancy her in a low, dark room, in a crowded city, in an abode where every association is horrible, preyed upon by the exorbitant demands of a harpy, long lost to every human feeling, racked by a thousand apprehensions as to how those claims are to be satisfied, and possessed of no means but those which lead to the very last debasement. Tell him to view her pale and haggard, her form wasted, and her beauty dimmed, tossing upon a restless couch throughout the night, and only crying herself into an uneasy slumber, from which morning awakes her with a thousand fears. Tell him that this poor creature is his daughter, repentant to despair, and only desirous of flinging herself upon his bosom. If after this he should refuse—but I will not anticipate that this can be possible, and begging of you to lose no time in your application, I can only most sincerely wish you all the success that it deserves."

BOOK THE THIRD:

WHICH CONTAINS THE HISTORY OF MY FIRST LOVE.



CHAPTER XXVII.

Which you will find a very short chapter.

A PAUSE of a few minutes succeeded the perusal of the foregoing letter, and then, as if but one mind animated all who had heard it, spontaneous offers were made of assistance of every description.

Several proffered a home for the protection of the poor wanderer, should her father refuse to receive her back; while others expressed themselves ready to procure clothes for her, and some to provide money to meet the expenses of her journey.

The good curate could not altogether suppress tears of joy at this practical evidence of the benefit of his doctrines, and still more, of his good example.

Extending his hands towards them, while his voice betrayed the depth of his emotion, he exclaimed, "My dear friends, you make me feel that I have not lived amongst you altogether in vain." Arrangements were quickly made as to the steps to be pursued, when the curate's daughter returning to our circle, other topics gradually stole upon us.

As the evening wore on, the worthy host pressed his guests to a homely supper, and making them join in a cup of hot spiced elder berry wine, we arose in a body and set out towards our different homes.

As Jeremy and myself now trudged along, we naturally fell into a discussion on the character of Mr. Plaine,

which, though he confessed himself to be on some matters of a different mode of thinking, was, he said, very much to his liking.—In corroboration of this opinion, he narrated one or two anecdotes, which he had heard that evening of the curate, and which entirely confirmed my prepossession in his favour.

“For,” said he with his usual shrewdness, “’tis from a man’s household, your worship, that his true character is generally to be learned—matters secret to the world are open to them.—Masks carefully worn in society are thrown aside in the closet; while entertaining towards their domestics, emotions of neither hope nor fear, there exists no cause sufficiently strong to make hypocrisy conquer nature. In short, sir, in my time I’ve often had occasion to remark, that the city or society does not exist on earth which servants could not set in flames of discord from one end to the other, and simply by giving loose to their tongues.

“On the other hand, there are few of the great or eminent who, if they could listen calmly for an hour to the strictures of their own menials, would not be better and wiser for their lives to come.

“To a philosophic mind, your worship, ’tis an odd thing is ‘good society!’”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Treats of the origin—the end—the charm—the bane of man’s existence—Love!

WITH many a bitter sigh, and no feigned heart-ache, I sit down to record this chapter. Alas! who has not some tender spot within his heart which even to approach is painful, and to touch is agony? Where is that strange being, whose youth has passed away without leaving some passages, the memory of which have become for ever consecrated—for ever dear.

It is with a trembling hand that I prepare to unveil the images so long embalmed by time, and to touch on that which was to me the dearest, the purest, the most momentous era of my life.

Again and again I look at these words, and with the consciousness of their truth, comes over me a strange emotion. I cannot yet control that mysterious feeling that bids us keep sacred to our own bosoms, those deep yet holy sorrows that have an untainted object for their source. Still I have arrived at that event which had a ruling influence over my whole destiny, and I will not suppress it. In disclosing my own sufferings, I seek not an excuse for the many follies of which I am conscious. I have a pride beyond the reach of compassion.

The agony of my own lot I will bear as I best may. To some brother child of error extend the consideration I reject, and while you blame the errors of the head, make some allowance for what may have been the sorrows of the heart.

Few are said to have transgressed the common rules and observances of society more than myself. Yet Heaven knows mine was no vicious heart, but trial unproportioned to the age which had to bear it, rendered desperate and reckless, a mind that was never perhaps too happily formed, to tread the path of every day existence.

Led to assume a levity unnatural to myself, long custom has almost rendered it a nature; even now I feel strangely prompted not to drop the mask, but the effort is in vain. The memory of what I might have been triumphs over the melancholy conviction of what I am, and Nature for a brief, brief space asserts her dominion and betrays herself.

The hollow sneer—The heartless gibe desert my tongue—the worldling's selfish but dear bought knowledge is forgotten—and the generous confidence, the freshness of heart that brightened youth, return once more with the remembrance of all that made it dear.

Prize it ye who still possess the gem. Learn early to mistrust that feverish restlessness of soul which leads us on to expect every thing from the future, and only leaves us, to discover in the end, that we have been madly blind to still greater joys that we passed upon the road.

But to my story—I dare not trust myself to linger, and the more simply such a tale is told, the better for one who is the historian of his own shipwreck.

It was on the morning ensuing the Sabbath mentioned in the last chapter, that as soon as the routine of my usual duties was over, I set forward to pay another visit to Fairyvale. Some irresistible impulse seemed to draw me:

forward, but I knew not what; and a vague feeling within, forbade me too narrowly to inquire.

The curate was from home. Availing himself of the beauty of the morning, he had set out in cheerful gratitude, to pay a few visits among his flock, for the first time since his illness.

It was of course to him that my visit was nominally made; but when I found Mary alone in the humble parlour, still confined by that cold which she described of so little import, I thought no more of the father, till he returned home, and symptoms of dinner appearing, I refused his warm invitation to partake of it,—and took my leave.

Another, another, and another day, found me still a visiter at this hospitable house; the indisposition of the curate's daughter still appearing to me to be the reason of my attention.

Day after day, and at length week after week, this continued; but still the health of the dear invalid did not gain ground. In the mean time, my visits became so much a part of habit, or, as I thought, so much a part of duty, that so far from their exciting self-inquiry, they soon grew to be the principal, and then the only, object of my existence.

While the fine weather continued, it was our custom to take a short and sheltered walk among such parts of the adjacent neighbourhood, as presented the finest views.

Mary, to whom every step seemed familiar, was wrapped in a warm shawl, and I, delighted with every thing that met my gaze, supported her light and beautiful form, my whole soul rapt in a deep and delicious trance, too bright, too dear to last.

It frequently happened, in our walks, that my fair companion had to visit several of her father's sick and poor parishioners, and it was not unusual for them to request the favour of hearing portions of the church service; for this she had ever been accustomed to read to them. Latterly, however, the exertion had been so painful, that she had constituted me her assistant.

At first the strangeness of my situation struck upon me; and then by a course easily to be understood, conversations of equally serious import followed. Thus I, who hitherto had scarcely ever thought on these points, now found myself constantly induced towards them by one, who to me had become every thing, and who in re-

turn seemed to take the warmest interest in my proper consideration of the solemn subjects of our intercourse.

Month followed month, nor need I say how imperceptibly there stole upon us the consciousness that our feelings were those of the deepest love!

Alas—that word!—which in itself combines the most concentrated emotion of misery and happiness, that the soul of man can experience!

On the effects of this passion, it is indeed idle to expatiate. To such as have never experienced its power, any true description would wear the air of exaggeration—while, on the contrary, to the sad initiated few, the most vivid portraiture must be poor indeed.

Many men pass through the world in total and happy ignorance of this fatal tempest of the passions, which desolates the hearts of too many; and yet, with all, it dooms its votaries to suffer. I know not, were the choice permitted, where one of their number could be found, who would not welcome back to his bosom those short-lived hours of ecstasy, even at the sad penalty of the long years of atonement that seem almost invariably destined to ensue.

In the confession of that deep and sacred passion, which was mutually shared between Mary Plaine and myself, no concealment was used, for none was deemed necessary. We resigned ourselves with all the unsuspecting innocence of youth, to the enjoyment of a sincere affection—nor was our happiness overclouded by any anticipation of those after-ills which a deeper experience would have taught us to expect.

How brightly and how suddenly did every view of my future existence then change!—The wand of some enchanter seemed swiftly to have passed over our destinies, and imparted a golden tint to all that met our eyes!

Long dreams of future happiness and joy flitted before us, and to me was given the ecstasy of feeling myself loved, without the lowering suspicion, that affection was bestowed for the possessions which I was to inherit.

These were unknown to any but myself, and when that beautiful being yielded up the pure affections of an innocent heart, it was to one whose lot she was prepared to share, alike in poverty or competence!—

In the mean time, while events were thus taking place, which were to have the most marked influence on my future disposition, the worthy curate either had no time to

behold the attachment that had sprung up between his daughter and myself, or else fancying from his trivial knowledge of the world that every thing would flow smoothly on, he forbore to trouble us with what he might have considered an idle interference. Thus brightly did the course of our affection glide.—Every thought—hope—wish of my heart centred in the object of its attachment, and I felt as if the air of heaven was not the breath of life, save only in her presence.

As I contemplated myself then, and contrasted my sentiments with those of but a few brief months before, surprise filled my mind at the happy change which affection had wrought; but, alas, when now I look at what I am—at what I have been, and think of what I then intended and prayed to be, I am filled with an agony of remorse and despair. Surely, if ever a dream of heaven visited this sad earth—mine was one!

A life of virtue and of happiness seemed stretched before me, the follies of the past I had vowed for ever to abandon, each trace of a predilection for their repetition I had torn away from my bosom—but my story will disclose all!

One morning, towards the close of the summer, the wind set in from the north-east, and though fearing that we should not be able to take our usual amusement abroad, I thought that Mary and myself might still enjoy ourselves with our books or drawings, as we had often done before. My anticipated pleasure was, however, considerably damped, on finding her laid up, with what the surgeon of the neighbouring village pronounced an attack of inflammation of the lungs.

Having been bled on the preceding evening, and being now confined to her chamber, this was the first day for the last two months that I was unable to see her.

A long epoch of many years has passed since that unhappy morning, but my emotions on hearing this intelligence, and the agony with which I at length left her father's house, is still vividly present to my recollection.—Her gloves and handkerchief were lying on her work-table, together with the withered leaves of a rose she had gathered on the day before.—Once more I almost fancy I place these insensible yet beloved relics in my bosom; often in after years to bedew them with the tears of an unceasing and ineffectual grief!

For three days the attack of inflammation continued,

during the greater part of which time she was considered in immediate danger, and what would I not have given to possess the skill to relieve her? With what true joy did I employ Jeremy to send anonymously for her use every possible luxury in the way of wine and the delicacies of the season.

Night after night my station was with her father at the foot of her couch; listening to the hurried breathing of the beloved patient—anxious to supply her slightest want—and praying but for the prolongation of a life with which I too well knew that every hope of my own happiness was irretrievably intertwined.

Heaven for awhile seemed to listen to our entreaties; and the first cause of our alarm being pronounced nearly at an end, I was again permitted to behold the invalid. Brief as had been the period of her illness, how sad was the change that it had wrought—the bloom and sprightliness of health had vanished, and the languor of pain and extreme weakness had usurped their place.

But it is not to exterior appearance that the heart clings with such an entire devotion. Beauty may be, and undoubtedly is, the means of first attracting our attention; but that total absorption of man's best and most intense feelings, which can alone be called true love—this is only to be won by that which passeth show,—truth and tenderness of soul, of which the fairest features can but be the outward type. As I looked at Mary on this momentary renewal of our past pleasure, a perfect conviction of this fact came over me, and though I felt that sickness had dimmed her loveliness, I also felt that it rendered her dearer than ever.

The perfect affection which filled my heart nearly to breaking, was then also, for the first time in her presence, mingled with fear—a vague but dread anticipation of the wretchedness and misery that were so soon to be mine.

Merciful Father! numberless as are the crimes of thy erring children, surely, some, and no slight portion of their offences is expiated by that self-inflicted penance—love! for, full indeed of meaning, was the prophecy of those lips which proclaimed, that much was forgiven to her who had loved much.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Which shows the benefit of good example in a parish priest, and the love with which it is rewarded.

BRIEF as bright were the hopes thus excited in the breast of her father and her lover, by the temporary recovery of Mary.

For a few days she seemed to revive, and then came upon us the sad blow, which dispersed at once and for ever, the fond anticipation of long years of future happiness. On the fourth day of Mary's treacherous convalescence, symptoms disclosed themselves in her disease, which led the surgeon to pronounce her already far advanced in a decline!

But affection is slow to credit the destruction of its dearest wishes. The awful suddenness of this blow was beyond description!—we could not—we would not believe it was to fall.

Could nothing be done?—nothing to avert the threatened bereavement? Had science, with her boasted power, no means of warding off from two idolizing hearts this terrible calamity? The surgeon's looks alone answered us in the negative.

He was a young man who seemed to have studied his profession with more than ordinary attention, and, after a pause of deliberation, expressed great doubt whether any steps could spare us the loss we were so shortly to sustain; adding, that our only hopes must rest on a voyage to the Madeira Islands, or to Italy.

At this sad news the worthy curate covered his face with his hands, and sobbed in irrepressible anguish, as he leaned upon a table near to which he was sitting.

"I never truly felt the sting of poverty till now!" said he: "And must my child then so soon perish?—but God's will be done!—her father's head will soon be laid beside her!"

"Have patience, sir, have patience, beloved sir," said I, as well as I was able, "my more than father!" but unable to finish the sentence I had begun, I rushed into his arms with all the madness of despair.

"Sir," said the surgeon, much moved, "in a parish where every one loves you as a parent, poverty will never be allowed to remain an obstacle to any wishes you may form. The little money I have been able to save is but a trifle, I fear, but to the last mite, sir, it is yours. I am only too thankful to be enabled to lend it for so good a purpose."

The father said not a word, but with a mournful shake of the head, held out his hand, and grasped, in all the warmth of gratitude, that of his friend.

"I have but done my duty," continued the latter, turning away, "and your parishioners will do theirs."

"Heaven is merciful," ejaculated the curate, as the surgeon hurriedly left the room, "and amidst all our afflictions there may yet be hope."

"There may, indeed, sir," replied I—though I felt not the consolation I attempted to convey.

"There seems to have been raised up for us at least one friend, equally able and willing to assist our misfortunes,—and the same unknown hand that has sent for Mary's use those little luxuries her state requires, may be again forthcoming with the means of giving her the benefit of a more genial climate.

"I was most ungrateful to forget it!" and the poor curate suddenly paused in the distracted pace with which he walked to and fro the deserted parlour. "Oh, most ungrateful, even for a moment to forget it! Truly, indeed, has it been said, 'what is man, that heaven should be mindful of him?'—when even its greatest blessings are scarcely received before they are forgotten."

For my own part, the feelings of grief and despair, which reigned in my own bosom, amounted almost to madness, and retiring from the presence of the unhappy parent, I sought out a lonely walk in the neighbourhood of the vicarage.

Here many and many a happy hour had I passed with Mary, and here I now gave way, unconstrained, to the anguish of that fatal day.

After having wandered longer than I had first intended, I turned back towards that house which was, indeed, so suddenly become the house of mourning. In a few minutes I heard some one riding after me, and calling out my name. Turning round, I beheld the surgeon.

"Do you know what has happened since I saw you?"

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demanded he, out of breath and looking somewhat agitated.

"What!" said I, tremblingly alive to the slightest fear.

"Why, that I'm just returned from being called in to Parson Longtext. He would take a dangerous leap this morning when out hunting, was thrown from his horse, and died before they could bring him home, and without the utterance of a single word!"

I started back in horror and surprise; but riding up close to me, he whispered in a lower tone,—

"There is some good, however, in every evil, for the leading people of the two villages are going to be at my house this evening, to draw up and sign a petition to the patron of the living, to give it to poor Plaine."

"Heaven grant he may!" returned I.

"Why, so we hope, and as I've a long way to ride, perhaps I may see you there to-night; and so good-b'ye till then.

The noise of his horse's hoofs had died upon my ear some moments before I could recover from the astonishment into which this sudden news had thrown me.

The awful accident which had happened to poor Mr. Longtext, at once banished all recollection of his defects. I thought of him only as the man beneath whose roof I had passed some weeks, of what was very likely to prove the very happiest portion of my existence; as of one, the misfortune of whose end forbade me to think of him with censure, though it could never advance for him the slightest claim to praise. Such a death might well be considered dreadful for the best prepared.

A few steps farther on, I met Jeremy. He had set out to convey to me this intelligence, and now gave me the particulars of his death, though in truth these amounted to little more than what the surgeon had communicated.

Contrary to the advice of the squire, he had taken a short cut, in which he had to make a leap across a stream, one bank was considerably higher than the other. His horse stumbled on the lower ground; his companions saw him thrown on his head, and when they came up, found him lying, partly in the water, and perfectly senseless, for he had dislocated his spine.

The confusion in the rectory may be imagined. Even the butler went the length—if honest Jeremy is to be believed—of drawing upon the resources of an onion, to aid

those emotions of grief which nature did not seem very liberally to have implanted in his soul.

Punctual to the hour of meeting, I repaired to the house of the surgeon. The petition was immediately drawn up and signed, and contained a testimonial of the highest description in favour of the worthy curate. We now came to consider if there was any person of consequence in the neighbourhood into whose hands the petition could be intrusted to deliver it to the patron, and thereby give to it greater weight.

Some gentleman present, suggested the bishop of the diocese, as a man whose works and writings advocated the most bland philanthropy, and whose speeches ever seemed to mark him out as a man specially destined to assist the helpless, the suffering, and the poor.

His lordship was at present residing in his palace in the city of * * *, only a few miles distant, having come down to assist at some religious ceremonial about to be celebrated. All seemed to agree that no person could more ably assist such an application to a lay patron than a bishop.

It was finally determined, therefore, to apply to him; and an early hour on the ensuing morning was named for the departure of four of our party, who were to act as deputies for the rest, and present his lordship with the petition. Having expressed a wish to be of the party, I was kindly invited to accompany them in capacity of secretary, and at five next morning we set out for the episcopal city of * * *.

CHAPTER XXX.

Which shows how far men are to be estimated from their writings, and how far we are warranted in judging of a private individual from a public character.

It was nearly noon by the time that we alighted at the humble inn recommended by one of our party, and proceeding to get our dinner with all due expedition, we arranged our dresses after our journey, and, stout of heart, set off to wait upon the bishop.

Having been fortunate enough to gain the inside of the palace, we were told that his lordship was terribly busy, and the moment quite uncertain at which we could be admitted to his presence—we might not be able to see him at all. "But," said the gentleman who had been deputed to act as spokesman, "will you be kind enough to inform his lordship that we form a deputation from the parishes of * * * and Fairyvale, come to wait upon him on a matter of some moment—indeed, I may almost say of life and death."

The lacquey—one of a number of menials decked out in "purple and fine linen" stared at the speaker in reply, and muttering with measured tones that he would deliver the message to his master, motioned for us to take seats. This we did on a bench, which ran round the sides of the waiting hall in which we were assembled.—Mechanically obeying this tacit order, I sat down also, for my mind was far too deeply oppressed with grief to interfere in trifles, or take much notice of aught that did not materially advance the object next my heart.

Immersed in my own sad reflections, half an hour stole away—another succeeded it—yet there we waited. My companions in the mean time, filled with wonder and admiration at all they saw, did not seem to feel the delay with nearly such acute sensations as myself.

In low whispers they conversed with one another respecting the number of people in a situation similar to our own, who, arriving and departing in a continued stream, never seemed to permit the waiting crowd either greatly to swell or to diminish.

In the mean time, fully impressed as we were with the excellent character of the bishop's books—of the bishop's sermons—of the bishop's speeches—and the energy with which in each department he insisted on the good of the people, and especially on the morality of my lives, and the saving of their souls,—every thing that my friends beheld only contributed to raise him the more.

With the deep respect of honest hearts, my companions beheld but his unbounded kindness in the number of people whom he drew about him to receive his favour. The splendour and state around were plain evidences of his hospitality, and even the number of his servants, and their purple liveries, were seen at once as undeniable evidences of his charity.

"Doubtless," said they, "these are poor, deserving

creatures, for whom he has been unable to provide in any other way, and has, therefore, taken them even into his household, although plain to every one, that he can never need the services of one-half their number."

"Excellent prelate," exclaimed another, equally convinced.

"I wish that so much worth would indulge us with a sight of it," whispered Jeremy, who came with me as a matter of course.

While my friends were thus indulging in these episcopal eulogies, I began to grow uneasy at our reception, and the continued influx of visitors, all of whom seemed likely to be admitted before ourselves. At this moment the entrance doors of the hall in which we sat were thrown wide open, as if to admit some person of consequence, while the eyes of the servants instinctively turned towards the figure of the new comer, who was not yet visible to ourselves.

As they did so, the idle joke died away upon their lips; they hastily drew up on either side in an attitude of deep respect, and the hum that had before pervaded the hall, at once sank into deep silence.

A light footstep was heard advancing, and a small figure in the well known dress of a prelate, and well advanced in years, presented itself.

The bishop's usher accompanied the stranger as he walked towards a private door that admitted him to the presence of his brother on the bench.—All eyes were strained forward to catch a sight, when I heard him say, "Is he here?"—of what preceded or followed this question I knew nothing; but the calm deep tone of the visiter's voice struck upon my ear with a most singular effect.

His lordship moved towards us as he spoke these words, and I was just enabled to catch a glance of a dark careworn countenance and searching eye, which seemed in their character to accord well with the voice I had heard. In another instant, the door closing upon his form, had hid him from our sight.

"What bishop is that?"—was the question buzzed around.

"The bishop of * * *," was the reply from a servant, in a tone of voice that at once conveyed dread and respect.

"The bishop of * * *!" repeated my companions, "ah! that's the violent fellow, that's so unpopular!—Plague

take the fellow, sir! if I don't hate him—I absolutely hate that man, if it's only from his writings—disagreeable, rogue, sarcastic fellow, they are full of sarcasm and every thing that's ill-natured—a bad hearted priest, sir, he *must* be.”

As these remarks were bandying about, so much in common with the general report on this bishop's character, I observed one of the servants come from the door of private audience, and desire another to give the necessary orders for having his master's carriage brought to the door within three quarters of an hour.

This roused me from my reverie.—If we wish to see the bishop to-day we must be active, thought I, and going up to the footman to whom we had first addressed ourselves, I slipped a guinea into his hand, promising him as much more on the termination of our interview with his master, if he would procure it for us immediately.

The fellow looked down at the gold, with a grin of secret satisfaction, and promising his best efforts, with a most obsequious bow hurried away.

“Oh, yes! doubtless you're a ‘poor deserving creature,’” muttered Jeremy, who unseen had followed at my elbow.

“Deserving or not,” returned I, “it's money well laid out; for, if I mistake not, here he comes to usher us to the presence. If so, Jeremy, do you await our return here.”

“His lordship can see your party now, sir,” said the servant with a low salaam, and in three minutes we were in what, I suppose, was the receiving room of the bishop.

Our first impulse was naturally to look round for the mild venerable countenance which the profession of this prelate naturally prepared us to meet.

I know not whether my companions were able to behold what they expected or not; but the first individual on whom my eye fell, was a man of the middle stature, dressed in a plain suit of black, and very little passed the meridian of life. His countenance was severe and forbidding, his manner repulsive, and his attitude and language those of coarsely expressed pride.

Before him stood an individual evidently many years his senior, by the thin and silver locks that served to adorn, without concealing, a bald head. His dress was splashed and soiled, as if with hard riding, and he wore a pair of yellow tan gloves.

Something unpleasant had evidently passed between these two, and when we entered, the former, pointing to the latter, said, "Moreover, sir, I am any thing but pleased at your appearance here—these gloves, sir—this dirty dress, sir, are scarcely becoming on a visit to your diocesan."

"I humbly beg your lordship's pardon," replied the culprit, in a trembling voice, which I instantly recognised to be that of poor Temple; "but I have ridden upwards of twenty miles to-day, and, fearful of being late, stopped to take neither rest nor refreshment."

"Let it not occur again, sir," replied he who evidently was the bishop, and with a haughty wave of his hand, "my good old friend was dismissed."

His lordship now turned his eyes upon us, as much as to say, what do you here? But after the late exhibition our worthy friend the spokesman rather looked his office than proclaimed it. The servant, who had still waited beside us, here hastily advancing, and bending with reverence, announced in almost a whisper, "The deputation, your lordship," and instantly retired.

Now then was the time for our friend to advance; he did so; but his lordship, without appearing to behold any one of us, turned upon his heel, and marching up to what appeared to be a sort of writing cabinet, he lifted the lid, and displayed a set of ewers for the toilet.

The astonished spokesman looked on with a stare of perfect incredulity as he saw the right reverend bishop pour out some water into a basin evidently for the purpose of ablution. The late lecture on appearance getting unaccountably uppermost in our friend's mind, he turned to me, who stood next, and whispered with much perturbation, "I hope my face is not looking dusty?"

Despite of all the sorrow labouring at my heart, it required the greatest command of muscle not to give way to the titter that shook within me. Assuring our worthy leader that he had nothing to fear in this particular, I waited in wonder to see the result of this extraordinary scene.

In the mean while the water which had caused so much alarm to the deputy, seemed to yield great satisfaction to the bishop, who went on washing, first his mouth, and then his hands, with no more attention to us than if our bones had been reposing with Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea.

In the mean time a most distressing silence pervaded our party, who all stood looking at each other; one twitching the coat-tails of a brother in distress to draw his attention, and another whispering some hint of advice.

This pause was, however, suddenly and effectually broken by the bishop himself, who without interrupting his amusements or even turning round, demanded, in an abrupt voice—"Well, what do *you* want?"

"This surly and ill-mannered question seemed only to increase the nervous feelings of our spokesman, and having got as far in reply as 'We want, your lordship,—' there he halted."

"Want my lordship!" quickly and angrily repeated the bishop, seizing a towel to wipe his hands, at the same time turning round evidently in no good humour, and using my friend's words with a totally different accentation.

"What may you want with me, sir?"

The spokesman more and more confused looked round to me, as I stood at his elbow; and thinking to bring him to his senses, I whispered from behind, "Recover yourself."

Fancy my confusion when turning to the haughty dignitary, he replied, "To recover yourself."

"You blockhead! what think you then is the matter with me?" demanded his lordship with the look of a tiger.

"Alas!" muttered I, "was ever man in such a most distressing disorder,"

"A—a—a most distressing disorder," replied the spokesman, catching at the last words, and by this answer bringing the matter to a climax.

I was ready to sink into the earth! Under any other circumstances I should have laughed to excess. Now the stake for which we were to have pleaded, and which by the weakness of our friend seemed irretrievably lost, came over me with an anguish that was paralyzing.

In this dilemma, nothing but the reply of the bishop saved us; for after glaring at his petitioner for an instant, he turned to the rest of the deputation with affected coolness.

"Is this man mad?" I attempted to mutter something, but the words died away upon my tongue, when to my astonishment forth stepped Jeremy, who it seems had luckily presumed to disobey my orders, and follow us into the room of audience.

Taking up our cause at its apparently hopeless point, with a readiness which no one but himself could have supplied, he made a most profound bow to the bishop, and replied,

"If he be mad, as your lordship seems but too justly to apprehend, it is a madness brought upon him, by anxiety for the sad cause which he has undertaken to plead before one of your lordship's exalted station. The business on which this gentleman was deputed to address your lordship," turning coolly round and drawing from our leader's hand, the petition with which he had been intrusted, "was very humbly to beg, that your lordship would be so good as to place into the hands of the patron of * * * and Fairvale this petition, and second with your powerful interest the prayer which it contains."

Here Jeremy bent forward with an air of considerable grace, to place in the bishop's hands the small roll of parchment on which were the signatures.

Before, however, he could accomplish his purpose, his lordship had snatched it away, and rapidly running over its contents aloud, exclaimed as he went on "No!—no—no. Interfere in such a matter, as this? decidedly not! Interfere with the patronage of another? Assuredly not! I wonder how you could have the assurance to prefer such a request! At the same time flinging the petition back to Jeremy.

"My lord," said I, advancing a step, and speaking in a tone of voice that not a little startled him, to whom it was addressed. "Your lordship little knows the distress—the agony—which a word from you—or little more—might alleviate if not remove."

He waved his hand as if to silence me, but all my natural boldness seemed to return at what I thought such unfeeling conduct. "That petition, my lord, may have described the general suffering and immediate wants of him for whom we supplicate; but if your lordship knew the man; if opportunity had made you acquainted with his worth—if you could see the anxious little crowd of his parishioners hourly besieging the humble cottage of their more than father; could it only be granted to you to hear their most solicitous inquiries, for the health of his daughter—if, more than all, your lordship could but behold that daughter, and her broken-hearted parent, who, without the worldly means to save, possesses only the affection to watch over her death-bed—my lord, you would

not—nay, you could not—lodged in a palace—and lapped in luxury—refuse, for mere form of courtesy, that aid which is more precious than even life itself!”

The bishop eyed me for an instant in silence, and then with another wave of his hand, he turned on his heel, and disappearing through a door behind him, we were left alone.

I could not at first believe that such was to be his only answer; but having waited twenty minutes, the noise of a coach drawing up in the court-yard, attracted our attention. I looked from the window, but it was only to behold the prelate step into his carriage, and with his three servants drive away.

It was now four o'clock, and nothing remained for us but to depart. Little as the knave deserved it, I gave to the fellow who admitted us, the other fee which I had promised him; and with something very like a malediction, recrossed the threshold of the palace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Which has much the same scope and tendency as the one preceding it

ON arriving at the inn, some of our party began to upbraid the bewildered spokesman—laying all the blame of what had happened upon him.

But this I contended was most unjust, for I plainly perceived that the refusal came from the nature of the bishop, and not from any circumstances which had attended our introduction. We next debated as to what was to be done. Was there any other person of consequence to whom we could apply? We knew of none, unless it was the bishop of ***; but he was supposed to be so excessively ill-natured and severe, that we determined to spare ourselves the trouble of an application; for if such had been the reception afforded us by the popular bishop,—what should we meet from the other?

Nothing, therefore, now remained for us, but to take ourselves home; and proceeding thence to the residence

of the lay patron, there, for obtaining our demand, trust solely to our own humble and unaided powers.

Humble enough! thought I, reflecting on the morning's scene; but hope had not yet entirely deserted my bosom, and it was with feverish anxiety that I agreed to delay our departure till next day; and taking an early supper, get forthwith to rest, and arise with the sun.

But it is not by the unhappy that repose is always to be obtained on mere desire. Supper being finished, I found it was impossible for me to sleep for at least some hours; so putting on my hat, I stepped into the streets, in utter scorn of a heavy rain, which for the last two hours had been falling.

I had not proceeded far before I became convinced that I must either take shelter or be wet through. "It is as well for the miserable to contemplate their distresses standing as walking," said I, and getting under an archway, I remained, watching the passers-by, and the different moods in which they seemed to take a ducking.

Among many others, I observed an elderly gentleman advancing on my side of the street, wrapped in a cloak, and followed by a servant. He took his walk at a leisurely pace, which seemed either to despise the rain, or view it sent from Heaven with other blessings, and therefore to be received with cheerfulness.

At the moment in which he approached, a poor woman, sadly in tatters, put herself in his path, and asked for charity. Bread was, I think, the article for which she prayed, and the word was repeated by the gentleman from whom she begged it.

Turning to his servant, he desired him to walk on, then beckoning his petitioner to come under the archway, which he did not perceive to contain a third party, he desired to hear her story. It consisted in her having a child ill at home,—a son, to whom she had neither medicines nor food to give.

"And yourself," said the stranger; "how do you exist?—have you food, if your son has none?"

"I mind not for myself," said the mother, "if I had only a little barley meal for him!"

The gentleman said nothing, but with a mute motion of the hand he turned and left the archway. The woman followed him; and I took the liberty of adding myself to their number, at a longer distance.

The shops were not yet shut, and I soon saw the stranger enter that of a baker; the woman went in after him;

and on coming up I looked through the window; not so much to see what he gave to his petitioner, as to look at his face; for it cheers one's melancholy journey in this world, to know that there are still some good Samaritans who are travellers on the same path, and sharers of our pilgrimage.

In the object which I sought to gain, I was, however, disappointed. The hat was drawn so deeply over the face, and the cloak so well wrapped round it, that nothing beside was to be seen. Having given his poor supplicant every thing for which she chose to ask, and double in quantity to her demands; they then turned to the open street.

Pretending still to be looking into the shop, I was not witnessed; but as they paused behind me, I heard the stranger say, "I can get you no medicines for your son until I have been to see him, which I will do with you presently. In the mean time is there no immediate want of your own which requires to be supplied? for the shops are rapidly shutting up."

The poor woman hesitated—begged a thousand pardons for mentioning such a thing to a gentleman—and stopped short.

"Never mind, tell me your wants; it is your duty."

Thus pressed, she explained, "If his honour would be so very generous as to spare her a yard and a half of flannel, to make into a petticoat, it would be a great blessing to her, for she had long been without one."

"You shall have it," said the stranger." "Is there any thing else?"

"Blessings, blessings on you!" said the poor creature, bursting into tears, "you'll think me very bold, but for months and months I've never known what it was to have a change of linen; and a few yards of cotton—I know, sir, I ought not to mention such things to a gentleman, but"——

"Say no more," interrupted he; and once more they proceeded, and once more I followed.

The shop to which they now bent their course was a clothier's; and as the boys were already putting up the shutters, I walked to the farther end asked for some immaterial article, and took a seat.

Still, however, I failed in getting the slightest view of the stranger's face, and having witnessed his purchase of more than twice the required quantity of flannel and linen,

together with thread, needles, &c., he gave them to the poor woman and once more rose.

Determined not to be baffled after so much trouble, I paid for what I had bought, and quickening my step, still kept my friend in view. We now threaded several narrow lanes and alleys, in a low quarter of the town. Suddenly the two figures turned sharply to the left, and became lost to the eye.

Running up to the spot, I found an old archway, similar to the one under which I had taken shelter, and while pausing in it, and wondering what had become of those of whom I was so anxious not to lose sight, I heard the voice of the female cautioning her benefactor, how he ascended some stairs, as they were in many places broken.

Listening for an instant to detect whereabouts they were, I found a wretched doorway, within which I could detect the ascending footsteps of those I sought.

After a moment's hesitation, I followed as softly as possible.

Nothing that I ever remember to have known, struck me as so horrible an abode. — Not the slightest glimmering of light pointed out the full horrors of the place, it is true; but the most dreadful effluvia poisoned the very air I breathed, and the ruinous condition of the stairs became perceptible at every step.

At length the poor woman entered a garret, and striking a light, I beheld through the open door, a wretched heap of rags and straw, in which was lying the sick child.

The gentleman gave a glance around the bare and desolate apartment, and seemed to express what he felt by slightly lifting his hand. He then stooped down to feel the pulse of his little patient, whose complaint he pronounced an inflammation of the lungs. For this he said he would buy her some leeches, to be applied over the chest; after which she must put her child into some hot water.

This brought her to the confession that she had used the last morsel of coal, to boil a little milk for the child's breakfast; she herself having tasted nothing since the day before. The benevolent stranger uttered a deep sigh, and telling her he sincerely hoped her sorrows were nearly at an end, he made a step towards the door, desiring her at the same time to accompany him; but paused to instruct her more particularly as to the hot bath for her boy.

Seeing no time was to be lost, I slipped down as noise-

lessly as was practicable, and without detection, in a house where every floor had its separate tenants.

Waiting beneath the archway till I beheld my friends issue forth, I once more formed an uninvited party in their train. I now watched them into several shops, one after another. The first was that of a druggist, where seeing the stranger write a prescription, and pay for that and the leeches; I of course concluded that he was some kind-hearted physician.

After this, I beheld him provide the mother with coals, potatoes, bacon, and some blankets. He then dismissed her to her home, pouring out upon him as he turned away the incoherent blessings of one who was "ready to perish."

He had not proceeded many steps, when he faced about to look after her, exclaiming "Ungrateful beings that we are! What are my sorrows when compared to hers?"

"Alas!" thought I, "that such a heart should ever know what sorrow is." It was a natural exclamation, but one most idle. Could any man! Could any human being, ignorant of sorrow's withering power, have felt and acted thus? O! never!

While the stranger gave utterance to the words I mention, the cloak was allowed to fall from around his face, as if with the departure of the poor woman, her benefactor's motive for concealment was at an end.

He little knew how closely he had been watched; and my surprise, my self-contempt may be imagined, when in passing this humble ministrant to want, my eye at once detected and recognised the severe,—the sarcastic,—the ill-natured,—bad-hearted Bishop of * * *.

Oh, how I then despised the abject weakness of giving such a ready credence to the multitude! of trying without evidence, and condemning without proof? And such was the man then I had heard so slandered, and in the slander of whom I too had tacitly joined.

Resolving to take a lesson for life, from what I had this night witnessed, I was about to return to my inn, when suddenly the idea occurred to me, that one so ready to assist distress, undeterred by the possibility of its being the result of misconduct, would still more willingly stretch out an arm—in aid of one of his own sacred calling, whose virtuous life and sad afflictions, might form a passport to the kindness of all but the flinty-hearted.

My resolution was taken and executed almost before I had time to consider of its propriety. Turning to the bishop, who followed close behind me, I said in an agitated voice,—

“My lord, I believe I have the honour to address the Bishop of * * *” and I now, for the first time, perceived the traces of tears upon his cheek.

He bowed, and without any farther reply seemed to await my business with him. Rather confused at this questionable reception, I began one or two sentences, which I was unable to finish, and finally ended by saying that I had been the unseen witness of his late charitable conduct to a poor woman.

“It was not well, sir,” said he, suddenly interrupting me, “it was not well, sir, to violate the sanctity of these sacred duties!”

Hastening to explain that accident alone had tempted me to be guilty of this intrusion, I begged his lordship to pardon what he might feel inclined to deem such an offence. I then proceeded to state, that I should not have addressed him, had it not been to bring under his notice a case of the most touching distress, which had brought me that morning to the city in which we then were, and which I believed he could effectually relieve without any pecuniary encroachment upon the field of his other charities.

In conclusion, I expressed my belief that it would not have the less claim to his notice, from nearly affecting the life and happiness of one of his own sacred order.

The bishop heard me patiently to an end, and after a pause of some few moments, he said that his hotel was not far distant, and desired me to follow him to it, that he might make farther inquiries.

With a heart wildly beating in my bosom, I complied with this request, and in the course of a few minutes, found myself alone with his lordship in one of his apartments. Having heard my story with the greatest attention, and cross-questioned me on it very closely, he said:—

“Go home, sir,—I fear my influence is not so effective as you seem to imagine, but I will do what I can; and, in the mean time, tell Mr. Plaine by all means to prosecute the voyage recommended for his daughter’s health, towards which I beg you will request him to accept these funds.”

The bishop who, while we had been talking, had been busy writing, now extended to me a draft upon his bankers for a hundred pounds.

"No, my lord," said I, declining the paper—"there is a friend of Mr. Plaine, who throughout this illness of his daughter has taken care anonymously to send her every little luxury that she might be able to use; and he has communicated to me his intention of taking upon himself the sole expenses of this voyage. He possessed no influence with the patron, or perhaps I might never have had the pleasure—which I shall ever esteem no slight one—of your lordship's acquaintance."

"Are you sure of this source you mention?"

"Certain, my lord."

"Go home then—return to the rectory, and to-morrow you shall hear from me."

Bowing respectfully, I withdrew, and at the door-way met a servant carrying in fresh clothes to the bishop, who, as well as myself, was wet through. As the door closed I heard him order his carriage to be at the door by five on the ensuing morning. I paused for an instant to implore a blessing on the head of one so unexpectedly our friend, and contrasting the conduct of the two bishops, at once departed to my inn.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Which shows how quickly our hopes may be extinguished, even when they beam most brightly.

On reaching home I found that my companions had all retired to rest; I did not therefore awaken them, but following their example, reserved till the next morning as much of my story as I intended for the present to communicate.

This consisted simply of the assertion that accident had procured me a powerful friend, who by that time had set off to advocate our cause with the patron, and that now our only plan was to return to the village.

When we had proceeded some way upon the road, I com-

municated to them the remainder of my tale, at which they were no less surprised than delighted, more especially when two miles from our village we found ourselves overtaken by a courier, who proved to be the servant of the bishop, and who was now the bearer of a letter from his lordship to the deputation.

With trembling hands we broke the seal, and found enclosed a letter from the patron to Mr. Plaine, together with the following lines to ourselves:

"The bishop of *** has great pleasure in informing Mr. Wortley and his brother members of the deputation, that his application to the patron of *** and Fairvale has been successful. The bishop will feel much obliged by the speedy delivery of the enclosed letter."

Our joy could now scarcely be contained within limits, and some of our friends seemed greatly inclined to indulge with a loving embrace the servant who brought the letter, while others were content with only insisting that he should come home and be made tipsy. Strange to say he declined both these demonstrations of esteem, upon the plea of haste, and having received our assurance of a perfect compliance with the bishop's commands, he set off on his return at a hard gallop.

Turning our horses towards what we thought we would soon make the happy village of Fairvale, we did the same.

Alas! how little can we ensure to ourselves of the future! With over-joyous hearts we rode briskly through the long street of the peaceful little hamlet, and sought out the curate's house, that stood apart upon the green.

Here, to our surprise, we found many of the poor villagers grouped together in little knots of from two to five, while the downcast melancholy of their looks, which scarce refrained from tears, at once struck to our hearts. On seeing us they instantly crowded round our reeking horses, and answered our alarmed inquiries with a mute motion of the head.

For myself I dared not trust my lips to ask a single question, but rushing into the house, and stealing quickly to the patient's chamber, I gently opened the door. In an instant I stood beside her to whom every thought—emotion—hope, and wish of heart and soul were indissolubly bound. Too truly and too soon were the looks of her father's parishioners explained!

But why—why proceed? Scarcely was time afforded

us to exchange looks once more—scarcely had I time to press the beloved sufferer to my heart—when she expired in my arms!

There are few in this world who have not suffered some deep and fatal bereavement, and to the experience of these, I leave it to portray the desolation thus brought upon her father and myself! Eternally severed as we were—at least in this life—from the most amiable and endearing being that ever compelled the human heart to love!

The power and the fulness of language itself must prove far too weak to paint feelings deep as these! Even were it not so, there is something in my bosom which forbids the profanity of the attempt.

To the illness which succeeded that sad scene, I have ever attributed whatever of insanity has since then been evident to myself—the gloom and madness of my life were dated from that day.

The strength of youth alone stood between me and the happy forgetfulness of that tomb to which, within six months, the sorrowing father was consigned.

Tearless I stood beside his grave, and envied him the resting-place he shared with her, for whose untimely fate I was through life to mourn.

The sad executor of his last bequests, I stayed but to perform the duty thus imposed upon me, and then for ever turned my back on Fairyvale.

O calm and beauteous spot!—in the dark and lonely vigils of the night imagination once more leads me back to thy delightful glades. There, were I once too fondly hoped to draw the brightest prize in Fortune's lottery,—there were chance-directed I had wandered, only to yield a shelter in my bosom to the most poisoned arrow in misfortune's quiver!

For ever had the bright vista faded from before my eyes. Now through the clouded vale of life I was to take my way, unknowing what I sought—and indifferent of what betided me;—henceforth, to add one to the number of those who, by an unhappy attachment, have been thrown reckless upon the world, there to experience that moral death, in which, alas! our being will not die!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Which contains some reflections on the Church system, as seen at Fairyvale.

Of whatever changes and inconsistencies man's conduct and designs may be found guilty, Nature still remains true to herself; he who has once observed her ways, may, therefore, prognosticate with safety, as to the course which she will generally take.

Thus in the world around, we witness in all things a constant contrast and reaction, and thus even in the human mind is every deep passion succeeded by a revulsion equally violent and opposed.

After a lapse of some months passed in the most profound despair, the death of poor Plaine, and the consequent succession of a new incumbent to the rectory, forced me once more upon the world. I soon but too truly experienced, that the loss I had sustained was never to be repaired; but this very feeling, only the more determined me on making a strong effort to subdue that grief which could tend to no other end than that of rendering me miserable.

I knew I could not prevent the vulture from preying on my heart; but by once more mingling in the empty tumult of the crowd, I might for a few brief moments, cheat myself into the belief, that I was still in possession of that reckless, aimless freedom which the fools of life term happiness.

But, before this poor point was attained, how often did the soulless laughter die away upon my lips! How often did I pause in the wildest extravagance as some unexpected circumstance brought back to my remembrance the image of her with whom I had once hoped to pass life in a manner how widely different!

Thus much only shall I say in my own defence, that he who beholds the surface of the stream flow smoothly on, may yet know something of the rugged bed, over which its sullen waters glide. Alas! in the actual scenes of life, how little do we know what breaking hearts surround us!

"And where will your honour go?" said Jeremy, as he saw to the packing of the last trunk of our post-chaise, and now stood waiting at the door to give the post-boy his orders.

"Go?—go to the devil!" said I, petulantly, for I was thinking of other matters.

"Go to the devil!" muttered Jeremy, in soliloquy, "that's a very well known road, no doubt; bāt folks are not generally so anxious to say where they're driving.—Yes, yes, we'd better go by degrees. People as often say, go to Bath, as the devil; so that's the first stage, I presume.

"Post-boy," bawled Jeremy to the whipper of horses, without changing a muscle, "first stage on the Bath road;" the post-boy touched his hat; in another instant
 • Jeremy was seated by my side—the door shut, and off we went.

"Jeremy, you impudent rascal!" said I, looking at him in a rage.

"Sir!" replied the valet, with all the reverence in the world.

"I have a good mind, sir," said I——

"True, your worship," interrupted he, "or you would not have Jeremy for a servant; for he detests a weak one."

"Shall I quarrel with the fellow," thought I, "no, I won't—'tis as well to go to Bath as elsewhere;" so falling back into a corner of the chaise, with a smile at the varlet's assurance, I thought I would say something kind to him, but as I could not take the trouble, I fell fast asleep.

After travelling two stages and a half I awoke, and feeling very hungry—"Jeremy," said I, "at the next stage we'll dine."

"I'm glad to hear it, sir."

"Very well; awake me when we stop."

"I will, sir; but permit me to say, you are very foolish to go to sleep."

"How so?"

"Because, may it please your worship, my conversation is infinitely to be preferred."

"Ay, truly?—why, you silly noodle, of what may you be thinking?"

"Of nothing less than the defects in the church as displayed to us in our late clerical residence. Had Long-

text, sir, performed his duty—had the whole system been only a little more conformable to reason, the better part of the misery we witnessed might never have occurred! Does not your opinion, sir, coincide with mine?”

“Why, Jeremy, I must confess that, generally, you entertain pretty tolerable notions; and for a professed rogue with such eccentric ideas of honesty, have by far the best and most correct views of right and wrong of any man I know. In this case, however, many points are to be considered.

“I saw that man’s vices as plainly as yourself, but I did not execrate so much as pity him. He is but one of innumerable victims to a bad system.

“Reflection has convinced me that we ought to be very tender of those errors of the human heart which are less the results of innate turpitude, than external circumstances. Surrounded by alluring temptations from without, and tormented by seducing inclinations from within, God knows it is by Nature sufficiently hard to act rightly without having the difficulty increased by the numerous evils of an artificial society.

“That such a person was never intended for a sacred office—indeed for nothing less, I grant you. He never would have made an amiable man, for he wanted the milk of human kindness; but placed in any other station of life, his foibles would never have approached so nearly to crime, or so completely disgraced the order to which he belonged.

“This shows an error somewhere. It proves, in short, that worldly interest is the worst and most ruinous guide to the assumption of sacerdotal functions. Men are generally expert in clothing doubtful actions in deceptive phrases, but how would the stern and naked truth be borne by a clergyman who had taken orders, solely with a view to a family living?

“How could such a one bear to be told, that he had sought the altar of his God, for the mammon of the devil?—that he had only attained the induction of the priest by the prostitution of the man, and that the assumptions of godliness with him are the abnegation of virtue.

“Yet, such is the fact, in the majority of cases. Under these circumstances, does the church wonder that it wants our reverence? To me it is clear—and some future day will hear the opinion unanimous—family livings, rich and unequal preferments, only tend to render the

establishment infamous, and the people indifferent. Such a declaration at present would be heard with scorn, or received with menace; but when you and I are cold in our graves, advancing intelligence will force the consideration of this topic on those most unwilling to entertain it.

"They will then have to consider, what is the true end of human legislature. Is it, or is it not, to promote the happiness of a nation by the paths of virtue? Is the last to be a sound or a reality? If the former—say so—indulge us with neither cant nor hypocrisy, and we understand each other.

"If expedience is still to be the worshipped goddess, and all the struggle is, whether this party shall submit, or that shall triumph;—whether this interest shall predominate, or that prevail;—the inference is plain—any one is to be the gainer but the public.

"On the other hand, if we have not been deluding ourselves with empty language, and mean to be ruled in integrity and honour, the path is equally clear. If abuses have crept in by tacit consent, and custom, the common law of the country has rendered them to a degree sacred, they cannot in common fairness be swept away at the expense of one, but all—for all have equally connived.

"Let the nation then act the liberal part that becomes it. The reform which is not worth our sacrifice, is not worth our possession, for we do not deserve the commendation of virtue, who are too mean to pay for the practice of it. Resume every family living in the kingdom, let them be bought at a fair price, and their distribution placed in proper hands—no longer court, within your sacred pale, the sordid and unprincipled.

"The possession of wealth and the profession of sanctity, are incompatible. Remove at once all fears of indigence or hopes of gain—let a sufficiency be proportioned for the comforts of the clergy, but no more—for why fling a stumbling block in the path of a good man, or turn his thoughts into an improper channel?"

"Again, strengthen the hands of the bishops."

"True," your worship, "but don't forget to weaken their potations, if you please."

"Why, ay, Jeremy, we'll look to that, since it will give pleasure to an honest man like you. But when they have, which they do not now possess, the power to restrain and punish evil, it will be infinitely better for all. Again, I see not why a clergyman's widow should be left more

unprovided than an admiral's, or why a benefice should not be rich enough to be charged with a widow's pension. But I see this is a short stage, and we approach the end of it—and interesting as church reform may be, it will bear postponing till after dinner."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Which shows, in more ways than one, that a poker is a dangerous weapon.

ON arriving at the village, and alighting at the only inn, I ordered the landlord to spread for us, in the coffee-room, the best dinner he could provide.

With a true landlord's bow, my host ushered us forth-into the little parlour; there with plenteous promises of speed and glorious fare of beef-steak and onions, he shut the door upon us. Hastening after him to countermand the appearance of the fragrant vegetable he had mentioned, I returned in time to see Jeremy walk towards the fire-place and take up the poker.

"Touch that fire if you dare, sir," said a shrill, sharp, ill-natured voice, proceeding from a portly figure comfortably ensconced in the ingle-nook.

"There are few things, my good friend, not to be dared by Jeremy the honest," returned the latter, very coolly thrusting the poker into the fire without even deigning to turn round.

In an instant the querulous old fellow's cane was lifted on high, and had I not caught it in my hand, it would certainly have descended on the head of my good valet with no slight rap.

Naturally incensed at such an unprovoked outrage, I said, "Excuse me, sir, but learn to use your cane with more discretion, or else I must take the liberty of thrusting it into the fire, and bundling your good rotundity of person on the top of it."

"Curse ye both! ye impudent rascals—do you know

who I am?" cried the old fellow with an oath, as starting on his legs he kicked his chair over behind him.

"Not a whit, and care just as little," replied Jeremy, who having turned round, fully comprehended all that had passed.

"Then curse ye, you vagabond, I'm steward of the parlour fire!"

"Likely enough," quoth Jeremy, in his impenetrable manner, "and a warm, comfortable berth too for this life!—though, for aught I know, your worship may have earned a hotter one, in that to come."

At this repartee several people present burst into a loud laugh, which so irritated our opponent that he once more lifted his cane, but thinking there were two to one, he contented himself with an impotent grin of rage, and applying heartily to the bell-pull, brought in the landlord.

"Turn these vagabonds out of the house, landlord, this instant!"

My host looked at us with mingled dismay and deprecation.

"Turn them out of the house, I say this instant, or I'll leave ye to-morrow morning!"

"Why sir, I hope they haven't been defending the French?"—"No!"—"or abusing the government?"—"No!"—"or protecting the flies?"—"or——?"—"No, sir; no, sir; curse ye—no, sir, they've done worse!—a thousand times worse!—they've been poking the parlour fire!"

My host shook his head with evident signs of sorrow, and turning to us, said in a most lachrymose tone, "Oh, gentlemen! if you've been so imprudent as to do that, you must indeed withdraw!"

"Mr. Landlord," said Jeremy, in great amazement. "I beg you distinctly to understand, that I'll see you at the devil first!"

"Turn 'em out! turn 'em out!" still more noisily vociferated the original cause of the fray, now more angry than ever, as he observed his influence—though why I could not divine—preponderating with the landlord.—"Fight it out, gemmen! fight it out!" interposed the spectators, so greatly amused as to wish to be more so.

"Only please to retire, sir, and you shall have—another pot of beer there, boy, for number six—a private room," whispered the landlord.—"Let me beg of you, sir, and I will explain all this."

This was enough—I saw mine host was more to be pitied than blamed in the matter—so making a sign to Jeremy to follow, I withdrew from the scene of strife, and followed my landlord into more peaceful, and as it happened, into better quarters.

“Landlord! landlord!” was now heard in the voice of the enemy below.

“Coming, sir, coming!—no fool like an old fool, gentlemen!—be with you in a moment”—and the unhappy arbiter of the house vanished with wonderful celerity down stairs.

“Now, may it please your worship, we can have a fire of our own to poke,” said Jeremy, ringing the bell and taking a seat without farther notice of what had happened.—The fire was accordingly lit, and by the time that its flames were roaring merrily up the chimney, our host once more appeared, bearing in his hands our intended meal.

“Landlord, may you live for ever!” said Jeremy, slapping that worthy functionary upon the back, and then smacking his lips and slightly rubbing his hands at the hot tempting dish before him.

“Sit down, Jeremy, and eat,” said I, seeing he was about to wait behind my chair. Jeremy—obeyed—the landlord opened his eyes—for being unable from my companion’s language to take him for any thing less than a gentleman, though an odd-looking one, he doubtless wondered of what rank might be the master, setting me down, perhaps, for aught I know or cared, as one of the blood-royal.

“Gentlemen,” said he, after the last adjusting touch of the potato dish, and bowing low as he whipped his white napkin of office under the left arm,—“Gentlemen, I humbly beg your pardon for the unfortunate scene below—Did you say the bread, sir?—but the fact is—we’ve excellent bottled ale, sir—the fact is, sir, that gentleman below is the most extraordinary—Glass of porter?—certainly, sir—character that ever came to—drink up quickly, sir—the house. Ever since he first came he’s always been saying—Change your plate directly, sir,—‘Landlord!’—‘Sir,’ says I,—‘Send in my bill to-night, I’m off to-morrow morning’—and would you believe it, sir—the pudding will be up presently, sir—he’s lived in my house seventeen years come Michaelmas.—He’s the most curious

—Cheese, sir?—ay, sir, not better cheese in the country—most curious character that ever I met.”

“Then prithee, my good friend, in mercy halt,” said I, perceiving what a curious mode of parlance, mine host’s calling had imparted to him, and presuming to interrupt this singular detail.—“Of all things, Mr. Landlord, I admire character—but not the parenthetical character with which you seem so much inclined to season your discourse—I can easily imagine it to make the worst of stories very droll, but believe me, it would also murder the very best. Have a moment’s patience then, till these dinner things are cleared away, and put me a bottle of port on the table; bring your chair, take your glass, and tell your tale fairly to an end.”

“Excuse me gentlemen, couldn’t think of being guilty of such an indecency as sitting down to your table—bottle of port you said, sir,—such a thing was never done yet in the Jolly Traveller, for I always say to gentlemen—get the cork-screw directly, sir,—doesn’t become a landlord, such familiarity—and, so as I was going to say, the gentleman below stairs is one of the whimsicallest people that you could never meet; for, seventeen years ago, as I said before, come Michaelmas, he drops into my house one morning, dines and spends the day, ‘and’ says he—‘your health, gentlemen!’—‘landlord,’ says he, ‘give me a bed and be cursed to you.’ ‘The curse to yourself,’ says I, ‘you may get a bed where you can, but it shan’t be in my house, for I have none to give you.’ ‘It’s a lie,’ says he, ‘you have—’ ‘Well, whether I have or no,’ said I, ‘you shan’t have it.’ ‘There you lie again,’ said he, and before I could hold out an arm to stop him, whip me, gentlemen, if he wasn’t past me up the stairs, into the first bed-room, and locked was the door—the best bottle of port in my cellar, gemmen—in the turning of a bed-post. Well, gemmen, I stormed and he raved—I’d have the blacksmith to break open the lock. He wheels round the bed, and barricades it against the door.—”Twas another gentleman’s room who wanted his things—he opens the window and flings them out into the yard—well, thinks I, if the Jolly Traveller isn’t to become a lunatic asylum, my name is not Muggins, and so said I—thank ye, gemmen, no more than this glass,—‘He may stay there to-night, but hang me if I don’t have the fox out of his hole to-morrow.’ So I went to show the gentleman who’d been turned out of his own room into the one that was

next it, and as 'twas only a lath and plaster partition, the first thing that I heard was Mr. Domitian saying to himself as he got into bed,—‘ Hang me if I don’t stay here all my life to plague this grumbling fellow.’ Old Nick himself, gemmen, could scarcely have frightened me more, and for aught I know, this might be his first cousin; so I solemnly determined, in the first place, to make him pay double for his bill. In the second place, to put him out of the Jolly Traveller, and in the third to—drink your very good health once more, gemmen,—send for a constable.

“ Well, sir, up I got, at five o’clock next morning, though ’twas a dark winter’s morning; and while I was fumbling about there in the little parlour, for a tinder box, and just thinking over these matters, I felt a heavy grip on my shoulder, and heard Mr. Domitian’s voice.

“ Well, Mr. Landlord,” said he, “ who’s to be master in this house, think ye, you or I?”

“ You, sir! you, sir!” says I, not thinking of what I was saying, and shaking from head to foot.—“ Right, you rascal, right,” says he, “ I’m glad you’ve come to your senses at last, curse ye—what’s my bill?”

“ Five pounds, sir,” said I, at a round guess.

“ Here, keep ten,” says he, “ for the bother you’ve given me, and see that my breakfast is on the table at eight o’clock to a second. I am off to take a walk.”

“ Gemmen, you may be sure I trembled very sufficiently, but having looked very hard—for I had now lighted the candle—and being able to see neither hoofs nor tail, I pocketed—Another bottle?—yes, sir!—the money, and lit the fire. However, gentlemen, to make short of a long story, here he’s been in my house ever since. Every day determined to—Step down the cellar in a moment, gentlemen—set off next morning, and every morning, just as firm by the ingle nook, as he was the day before. Seeing he’s been very kind in giving me heavy sums of cash, gemmen,—for he says he wont lend—why I’ve been very particular to humour his whims—one of which is to let no one touch the parlour fire except himself; so he’s elected steward, and provided he can kill all the flies—praise the British constitution—cut his jokes upon the customers, and abuse the French—he’s perfectly happy.—Ay, a true old liberal English gentleman he is, every inch of him, I warrant ye, and worth a power of money too—fifty thousand pounds they say—made up their in London in the ho-siery line.”

"A good customer then, landlord, doubtless."

"Not a better have I to my back, sir!—though ten to one that ever I had any of his money.—He came down into these parts to buy some snug cottage, and if so be we hadn't chanced to have a row at first, two or three nights would have been the outside of his stay—and as to regularity, sir, never was such a regular man—not a drop does he drink, not a morsel does he eat to-day, that he doesn't eat and drink to-morrow."

"Then, Mr. Landlord, let me tell you there's one great fault about your friend."

"What, sir?" demanded mine host, in great alarm.

"Why, that he evidently has been born a few centuries too late; for clearly, nature's only reason for producing such a being was to give mankind a rude notion of clock-work."

"Rude enough, and may it please your worship!" said Jeremy, with a hem.—The landlord grinned applause, and with a low bow departed for the—But why should I here narrate the history of the second bottle? Was it not, after the inviolable custom of British landlords, vastly inferior to the first? Most indubitably it was; so we wasted no farther time upon its contents, but ordering our horses to be put to, forthwith—paid our bill, and once more set off upon our travels.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Which treats of our first morning in Bath.

"AND so I am in Bath," said I, awaking with a singular sensation the morning after our arrival in that most ancient city. "And what shall I do here?"

"Imprimis, if it please you, worthy sir, get up and shave," replied Jeremy, withdrawing my curtain—"first take your breakfast, and then take your chance as to what comes next."

"But stay, Jeremy," said I, "in this place it is the fashion, is it not, to go out before breakfast and drink luke-

warm water, and mixed with salt? Yes, you would be a thousand times more behind any of the other fools in such proceedings; so while I exert myself to gain your wish, I exert thou thy influence with the lady to get her a sustaining cup of coffee."

In the presence of a favouring fortune, we all retired to the pump-room, and for some minutes were in silence amid the motley group of fashionable follies. After speculating for some few minutes on the strangely varied crowd, I came to the decided conviction, that for every individual who came there to restore health, at least fifty came to dissipate it.

It seemed to my eye to be a sort of congress to which every class and denomination of people in the gayer walks of life had sent one or more to represent them. In the midst of these, I, however, stood alone, unknowing and unknown, though I had no doubt in my own mind, that if the names of all the company present had been displayed to me, I should have found several of my own relatives, more or less distantly related.

Far, however, from experiencing that melancholy which is generally the result of such a state of loneliness, I seemed to experience a stern misanthropical joy at being so totally independent of the remarks and affections of my fellow worms, mixed with a reckless merriment at the conviction of how utterly farcical was all that related to human joys or its sorrows.

This conviction I had in a manner forced upon myself as the result of the recent losses that still rankled freshly in my bosom. After-experience has proved to me that it was a wrong conviction. Had I limited my contempt to human grandeur and ambition; it would have been just. These are utterly farcical, ridiculous, and absurd, and solely for this reason they are so rarely grounded on the only true basis—good sense.

"Well, Jeremy," said I, turning round, "do you see any of your friends here?" "Sir," answered he, "I have my eyes fixed on a very early one—yon gentleman of the first water, there before us." "What, he who seems so deeply and successfully to have studied the peacock's costume?" "The same, your worship." "And pray what may he be?" "As dexterous a thief as ever acquired rights of property in a civilized community, sir. Few indeed can come up to him in the light-fingered line. I was nothing to him, and indeed it was his arro-

gant bearing on this superiority, which occasioned our quarrel and separation. Having gone together to see a menagerie, the keeper, who knew his person, turned him out in alarm, for fear he should pick the kangaroo's pocket. After this, the fellow became insufferable."

"Ha, ha! and now look at the group of creatures that have followed him ever since he got out of his sedan, wondering who so much finery may cover, and if the truth may be known, I dare say, envying his supposed consequence."

While looking on, I beheld a new-comer arrive, and from the swagger of his manner and remarks, at once perceived him to be one of some note—good, bad, or indifferent.

His person was dressed with the most scrupulous care, and as much dandified display as the sable colour of his garments would permit. In one hand he displayed a gold snuff-box set with diamonds, in the other dangled a cane, whose top was formed by a pearl of price. His lace and linen were equally fine, and the very air grew faint upon his person with perfume. On his arm dangled a lady equally grand, precious stones and gauderies of every description were worn by her, and not altogether without some taste, being set off to every advantage by a very pretty face, that turned languishingly over her shoulder.

As she thus came on, she talked and chattered to a numerous bevy of gallants, greatly delighted to seize any opportunity of pouring forth their adulations, and seemingly without any better reward than the tap of her fan, a favouring glance from her bright eyes, or the well-lipped appellation of "Impudent Creature!"

These generous manners of making herself common to all the world, she seemed in some sort to have imbibed from the dressy personage on whose arm she leaned, and who, from his utter carelessness of what she did, I of course concluded to be her husband.

Certainly, thought I, it is very kind and condescending in him; but as he advances he seems to have a gracious word for every one. It was——

"My lord, how do you? I hope you left the countess in good health?"

"Your grace, I'm delighted to see you!"

"What, my dear marchioness, is it yourself?"

"Why, my lord viscount, you look so well I scarcely knew you!"

"Lord Fudge-fudge, good morning!" and, so on. As for baronets and knights, whole swarms of these contemptible creatures seemed to hang upon his flanks and rear, content even to receive a nod—and quite surprised if it were given with civility.

After eyeing this glaring luminary for some time in silence, I perceived that the room contained many inferior planets of the same order, all sombre beings dressed in black, with large white shirt frills, and resplendent-headed canes, from the pearls of great cost through all the various gradations of amber, gold, and silver, down to the ivory of the lesser stars,—lower than this I perceived it was beneath their dignity to descend. I caught a glimpse, I thought, of two that were only of bone—imitation and so on; but as I could not prove this degrading surmise, I forbore even to breathe it.

"Who can they all be?" thought I; for a closer examination of their conduct enabled me to perceive, that if they were not all following the exact manner of their chief on a smaller scale, still all of them seemed to possess a numerous and deferential circle of acquaintance, which, in one or two instances, had formed a sort of nucleus around their friend. The last being in discourse, it reminded me of the delivery of a set of clinical lectures.

"Jeremy," said I, "thou man of information, go to one of the water-drawers, and find me out the name and quality of this knight of the pearl-headed cane."

"Why, your worship, I need not go far to tell you that, for I know him well enough already; it is the great Bath physician, Dr. Bubblerius."

"Ho, ho!—What, then, you and he are also old acquaintance?"

"Old enough, and may it please your worship; for the best watch that ever passed through my hands was one that I took the liberty of enticing from that respected gentleman's fob!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Good, Jeremy, very good, indeed! I'm afraid you're better known than trusted in this fair city?"

"Oh, never fear, sir, here there are too many rogues in a heap for one to be noticed in particular."

"But you never told me that you'd been in Bath before."

"No, sir, nor was it necessary, you perceive; for I knew that you'd soon find it out."

"Thou art an odd fellow, Jeremy!"

"There cannot be a doubt of it, your honour."

"Then tell me, Jeremy, are all these grave dark-looking gentry—are they all physicians?"

"Oh, save your honour, no! their ranks are as various as their practices. Some are physicians, some are surgeons, but the greater part is formed by apothecaries."

"But still they are all of the medical profession?"

"All of that learned tribe, your worship."

"Come, come, my master, speak softly of the healing art; we none of us know how soon we may need it, while those who have never required, little know the value of it. Besides, you are in their very fortress of strength and stronghold."

"True, sir! 'tis astonishing how cocks can strut upon their native hills. But this you may quickly see; if you will only ask a favour from a soldier on parade—a sailor on board ship—a lawyer in his court—a doctor in his hospital—a merchant in his counting-house, or a parson in a cathedral town."

As Jeremy finished the delivery of this diatribe we reached the pumps, and requested our doses.

"Pshaw!" said I, flinging down a most superlative mixture of numbers three and five—"Come away, I'm sure I could manufacture it quite as nasty, or very nearly so, at home, and for less than half the price!"

"Sir," said a wag, who stood within hearing, and imagining I spoke in earnest, conceived this to be a famous opportunity for being witty at a stranger's expense,—

"Sir!" said he, with a most insinuating bow, and in so loud a tone that every one could hear him, "Will you do me the favour of allowing me to pay for you?"

"By all means; I shall be very much obliged to you," replied I, holding out my hand as imperturbably as if I had been born to the eleemosynary calling.—"Let me see," I continued, "two glasses come to a shilling, and half-a-crown for the pump-woman makes it three and sixpence."

Colouring very highly, the wag, to the infinite amusement of the spectators, drew out a gay purse, not very well stocked, and put the sum into my hand.

Dropping it into that of the attendant, I said, "Take this and be thankful—for what says the proverb?"

"Fools and their money soon parted," added Jeremy.

"You rascal," exclaimed the discomfited wit, losing his temper as well as his cash, and turning on my honest

friend in a rage,—“Who, and what are you, sir? I’d have you to know, I’ve a mind to kick you well?”

“Nay, sir,” interrupted I, “that is my servant, and if you take the liberty of kicking him, I must take leave to break your head—nothing more.”

“Sir, sir, I don’t understand this!”

“Very likely, and for your sake I hope you never will;” and motioning to Jeremy to walk before me, I stuck my hands into my pockets, and without once looking up from the ground, slowly sauntered down the room till we came to the sedan chairs. Here, popping Jeremy into one, and taking another myself, we went home to breakfast; laughing heartily at the would-be wit, who having made no farther reply, had, as I supposed, slunk away into congenial obscurity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Which narrates my initiation into the mysteries of physic.

“JEREMY,” said I, as my honest friend removed the tea things from the breakfast-table, since you have thought proper to bring me, nolens volens, to the very headquarters of the medical world, know that I have determined on becoming a disciple of *Æsculapius*, and studying the healing art. Finding as I now do that the mania for rambling has recovered all its power over me, it is impossible to say when it may terminate, or where it may lead me. What species of knowledge therefore so useful?”

“True, your worship, all travellers should be skilled in some art of attack and defence, and one mode of killing is as good as another.”

“Come, you rascal, behave yourself; and remember the story of the bishop; that fact at once convinced me, to what a truly sublime end the study of medicine can conduce. No more jeers, then—I thought at the moment, and I say now, of such a science no gentleman ought to be without some knowledge. There is something wretched

in that mind which would not be enlarged and humanized by its contemplation. No more, sir; put on your hat and follow me; and now that I am about to enter on my pillage, I wonder with whom it will be?"

"Take the first that comes to hand, sir," replied Jeremy, as we reached the street. "Chance is as good a guide as if she'd been bred to the calling."

"Right, Jeremy, and if I mistake not, over the way yonder, shines the plate of an apothecary. Your eyes are better than mine, what does it proclaim to us?"

"That one Mr. Solid resides within—ready and willing to bleed, blister, or dose your worship, as your worship's occasions may demand, to say nothing of drawing your teeth, cupping your temples, or any other little amusement that may pass between an apothecary and his patient."

"I thought as much!" and having crossed the street and applied myself to the bell, the door was opened by a very tall, thin, hard-featured personage, in whose eye, however, there was a curious vacancy. It seemed to be fixed most intently on you, and yet, somehow, conveying an unaccountable impression that it nevertheless beheld as little of you as it did of the moon.

"Is Mr. Solid within?" said I.

"Sir, I am Mr. Solid for want of a better," replied he.

"Sir, there could not be a better," said I.

Mr. Solid took the compliment in earnest and bowed low.

Having admitted us within what proved to be a surgery, surrounded with divers coloured bottles and drawers, Mr. Solid pointed to a chair, and asked me to state my complaint.

Two young men who were busy at a counter mixing up medicine, at once drew round me at this kind invitation; expecting, I suppose, to profit by the unfolding of my case. After looking up at their anxious faces consecutively for a few minutes, I drew a long breath, like a good old valetudinarian whose bellows are a little the worse for wear, and then replied, "Many thanks to you, Mr. Solid; but the truth is, my complaints are so numerous, it will take me at least six months to recapitulate them. Be kind enough, then, to state at once what would recompense you for board and lodging, for myself and servant, during such term of their narration."

"Why, sir," said Mr. Solid, without the alteration of

one of those grave muscles which seemed never to have known motion; "provisions just now are very dear, and what you propose to take thus long in narrating, would of course occupy much of my time in hearing. I don't think, sir, I could accommodate you for less than from six to seven pounds a month."

Smiling at the simplicity of a disposition which evidently took, in its most literal sense, all that was addressed to it, and not choosing therefore any longer to pursue this farce, I requested the favour of a few words with him alone. His two assistants having left us to ourselves, I informed him of my desire to study the therapeutic art, and after a little explanation, the terms were agreed between us, and another hour beheld me and my luggage safely stowed in my new quarters.

"Now, Jeremy," said I, "valuable opportunities should never be lost, so come down with me; I am going to take my first lesson; hear you all that passes, and profit by it."

"Oh, doubtless, your worship! so that when we come to travel together, we may pass away the time by playing at doctor and patient alternately."

"By the rood, then, my fine fellow! I'll physic you well, depend on it."

So saying, we descended to the surgery, where my future instructor was awaiting me; my first lesson consisted in getting by heart the tables of weights and measures, the list of various medicines or pharmacopœia; all of which I received, of course, very gravely, and equally, of course, laid aside as soon as his back was turned; for his two elegant assistants doing me the favour at this juncture to propose "a game at squirts," or, in other words, to syringe each other with the pure element as completely as we could. I, of course, complied, necessarily thinking that this was an infinitely better mode of learning physic than the other.

Jeremy and I accordingly opposed ourselves to the other two; but the rascals were too cunning for us, as we might naturally have expected, when undertaking to engage men at their own weapons. Suddenly mixing a quantity of strong spirits of hartshorn with their water, the first discharge threw some of this vile mixture into poor Jeremy's eyes, who, losing all his good temper from the violent agony thus occasioned, at once sprang forward on the aggressor, and would soon have beat the better part of life out of him, had I not interfered.

Laughing heartily at the boyish folly in which I found myself engaged, I desired my honest friend to be cool, and retire to his room, there to get off his wet clothes, and to await the subsidence of the pain; at the same time cautioning my future companions that the next time they put a trick upon my servant, they must stand the consequences.

Promises of fairest behaviour were immediately held out, together with offers of friendship, and as the first proof of this, I desired to know the character of Mr. Solid. This I learned to be that of a mild-tempered, absent man, not knowing too much of the world, nor yet troubling himself to regret his want of knowledge. One whose life had been devoted to science and celibacy—judge then of how much he was ignorant.

This description, though exceedingly true, did not, however, do any thing like credit to the many delicate shades which minute discernment seldom fails to discover in almost every disposition, and for which facts soon spoke to me more plainly than could aught besides. Hardly had I time to con over the task he had set me, when the learned gentleman himself returned from his first round of visits, to write down in his day-book the necessary medicines. As this was of course rather an important part of the in-door work, my particular attention was desired, while the elder assistant wrote to his dictation; Mr. Solid describing occasionally the symptoms of each patient, and making remarks as we went on.

As this was finished, the younger apprentice of the two, who it seems had been absent lately on a visit to some of his friends, said, "I don't see, sir, that you've ordered any thing for Mrs. Black—that consumptive patient.—Is there any alteration in her case since I've been in the country?"

"Yes, sir," slowly said Mr. Solid—making his usual pause between many of the words of his answer; and never lifting his eye from the page of the day-book—"a very great alteration—she's dead—and buried—long ago."

That's cool, thought I, and seeing that no farther notice was likely to be taken of this "alteration" in a patient's case, I ventured to say, "Is it not customary, sir, to note down the death of a patient?"

Mr. Solid looked up at me for a moment, as much as to say, "How lamentable is your ignorance!" and then resuming his occupation, rejoined, after a pause—

"Never, sir!"

Another silence ensued—then closing up the leger with the same imperturbable air, he said—"Now, gentlemen, let us make up the medicines."

At this signal, the two assistants began to tuck up their sleeves, while Solid, himself, repairing to a closet in the surgery, proceeded to take down a jacket from the shoulders of a skeleton on which it hung. He next transferred it to his own back, after laying aside his long-tailed black coat; then arming himself with a pestle and mortar, he proceeded to work in his vocation.

Many a strange mess did I behold quickly blended together and bottled off—each cork being first duly subjected by the assistant to the pressure of his *dentes molares*—the mixtures having been previously put to the lips of the immoveable Mr. Solid, who assured me, in his sententious manner, that he never permitted any drugs to leave his house without being thus proved.

Alas! thought I, poor sick visiters of Bath! Is it not enough that Fate decrees to you a pint of salt and filthy water before breakfast, that ye should be moreover indulged with these abominations after dinner! Not that these matters might not doubtless have been very salutary to them, the waters as well as the physic, and the physic as well as the waters. Enough it is for me to be abundantly thankful that it was not for my stomach they were destined.

The medicines being duly tasted, without producing the slightest change of countenance, alike the sour, the bitter, and the sweet, we went to the dinner-table, where I was not a little rejoiced to see a niece of the stiff old bachelor, —a rasy mischievous-looking damsel, who promised, as well as sparkling eyes could promise, greatly to relieve any monotony in my new calling.

Dinner over, Mr. Solid proceeded to catechise me on the pharmacopœia, and finding my lately acquired knowledge not very extensive, recommended me forthwith a closer application, desiring me to follow him for that purpose to a little room off the surgery, in which latter place he also set his "young gentlemen" to work at the beating of pills.

Having seen we were all busily and usefully employed, he himself walked up stairs to his study, where it was his habit to pass all his leisure hours in writing at a large volume, three feet long by two broad, on the various diseases of the human frame; and it must be confessed, that

however large his book, it bore no comparison to the sad field of his labours.

No sooner was Solid's study-door fairly heard to close, than away went the various medical implements of his worthy pupils. A huge mass of pills was flung down into a corner, there quietly to repose, while a very promising bolus was stuck *pro tem.* into a mouse's hole. A pair of boxing gloves was then produced—the surgery door secured, and a set-to commenced. In the midst of this improving amusement, the door bell rang. In an instant, away went the boxing gloves into their retreat, a drawer labelled "Papaver. Cap." Up came the pills again, and while one pretended to be busy bruising their plastic mass, the other kindly drew the bolus from its hole, and twisting it rapidly 'twixt his fingers and thumb, unbolted and opened the entrance from the street.

"Ah, Peggy, is it you?" exclaimed both these Pickles, in a joyful, but low tone of voice.

"Devil take you, old woman, I thought you were never going to show your face here again."

"Show my face here again—ay, ay! I'll do that, I warrant me, for many a day yet. But how goes on business, my young masters? What have ye got for me—a good job this time, eh?" Then squinting a suspicious look at me as I sat retired at my book, in a sort of back parlour—"Who have ye got there, sirs?"

"Oh, never mind him, Peggy! He wont peach," said Collier, the name of the elder of the lads.

"Peach; no, no; that would be appearing in a new character—never fear me!" said I, not a little amused at the pranks of these two varlets, and never imagining that in this case they were bent on any thing more.

However, on this assurance, the old woman produced a large and empty basket from under her cloak, and placed it on the counter, while Jones, the younger apprentice, opening a trap-door in the floor, descended a few steps into what appeared to be a sort of store-room. In a few minutes he ascended, bearing in his arms a hamper of clean bottles, which having transferred with wonderful celerity and silence to the old woman's basket, the emptied hamper was returned to its place of rest—the hatch closed, and a bell, communicating with Mr. Solid's study, then rung, to signify that his presence was desired.

The study door was now heard to open, and step after

step slowly descended Mr. Solid—solid indeed! But, for the impossibility of the fact, you might have sworn 'twas the parish church-clock coming down stairs.

"Mrs. Mills, sir," said Collier, without ever looking up from the mortar, round which he was rubbing a whole host of abominations, with a face as grave as his master's.

"Oh,—Mrs. Mills!"

Mrs. Mills rose and courtesied—"I hope your honour's well! Your honour, I declare, is looking charming!" The hag! smiling the while with all that hypocrisy which old women seem made on purpose to enact.—"Mr. Jones, are these bottles clean?" said Solid, without noticing the compliment, a matter perfectly out of his line.

"Oh, yes, sir!" replied Mr. Jones, very industriously scraping a cerate-pot, as if for a box of ointment, when he very well knew the vessel to have been for days as empty as his head—"Quite clean, sir."

"Then come and count them," rejoined Mr. Solid; when putting aside his pretended employment, Jones advanced, numbered out the phials on the counter before his master, who having seen that they were of a proper species, summed up their price, so much a dozen, and paying the amount to the old woman, remarked, with something like a sigh, that 'bottles went very fast in his surgery. "I hope," turning to the youths, "I hope, young gentleman, you are careful not to break them more than you can possibly help."

"O, dear no, sir; very careful!"

Another sigh succeeded this assertion, with a doubtful shake of the head; and once more the good gentleman departed to his study. No sooner was the coast thus clear than the old woman disbursed two-thirds of her booty to her accomplices, and with a mutual grin of intelligence, they allowed her to depart. My curiosity having been somewhat piqued by witnessing this little scene, I advanced to ask some explanation. This, the kindness of Messieurs Jones and Collier instantly supplied, together with a very gracious offer of a share of their booty. Declining their generosity, I took the liberty of advising them to abandon this road to wealth as speedily as possible.

And yet I could not help smiling at the roguish ingenuity which had hit on such a plan, as well as the child-like simplicity and ignorance of fraud, which had caused

Mr. Solid to fall so easily into their trap. It seemed that the medicine-phials were always bought from old Peggy, and sometimes other women, who procured them as nurse's perquisites from the sick; that these two sucking apothecaries were, therefore, in the habit of secreting four or five a day; and as soon as the store increased, they were sold, as I had seen, to their lawful owner, who thus had the pleasure of buying his own goods six or seven times over before they finally left his house. Having read these youths a lecture which, however, I was not fool enough to think they would follow, I promised secrecy for this offence, and, flinging down my book, went off to see what sort of a girl the simple surgeon's niece might be—musing at the same time, as I went along, on the strange and seemingly inscrutable destiny, which so often in this life decrees the amiable and the wise to be the prey of the vicious and the ignorant.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Which shows that even a surgery has charms, and how and where a blister should be applied on the truest principles of counter-irritation.

In this way two or three weeks glided on, unnoted by aught except the tricks which the apprentices contrived to put upon their unsuspecting master during every hour of the twenty-four. In the mean time, I adhered to his advice in reading what books he pointed out, and in return, he declared himself well satisfied with my progress, and initiated me into the art of bleeding and tooth-drawing. The first of these being a very useful operation, I learned to execute skilfully; but the filthiness of the latter disgusted me, and I made but little progress, being unable to get beyond that degree of expertness which sufficed to break the teeth of my patients short off, and call forth my kind advice, that they should take no notice of the remainders. With regard to the style of Mr. Solid's practice, it always appeared to me to be that of an upright straightforward man who did the best for his patients that his knowledge could suggest, a species of conduct which insensibly won upon my regard, notwithstanding his stiff methodical habits, and utter want of worldly knowledge.

He now expressed himself so well pleased with the progress I had made, as to promise, in another week, that I should go the round of his patients with him, but in the interim a little incident occurred to disconcert his plan.

Late one Saturday evening, happening to come in from a walk, I found Mr. Solid very busy in the surgery, writing out a list of some medicines, which were to be made up and sent away forthwith. As there was no one in the house but ourselves (in the medical department)

he would, but for my timely arrival, have had to compound his own prescriptions. He had come from a long ride in the country—had taken no dinner, and was, therefore, not sorry to see me make my appearance.

Requesting me to make haste with my task, he went off to dine, and I set to work. Among other comforting matters ordered for the consolation of this happy patient, whosoever he might be, was a large blister in the shape of an ace of hearts, intended to cover the whole chest of the invalid. This being the most troublesome part of my duty, I executed it at once, and was in the very point of duly putting it on paper, when in came the apothecary's niece—a game of romps was the very proper result, as a matter of course—and soon hearing Mr. Solid's footstep coming along the passage, we flew into the little parlour, in order that I might pop my fair friend into a large, and, as I then thought, a most convenient closet.

This I considered myself very lucky in effecting, as the old gentleman came into the surgery. Returning thither with all possible coolness, I found him seated in the great arm chair, commonly used for our patients.

"Pray what was that noise I heard in the surgery, Mr. Wortley?"

"Noise, Mr. Solid?—ahem, noise, Mr. Solid?"

"Yes, sir, I said noise."

Devil take you for saying so, thought I, mumbling something about books tumbling from the shelf, as I was hunting for a particular author.—The old gentleman uttered not a word in reply, but taken up the candle he stalked into the next room, and without a moment's hesitation, advanced towards the fatal ambushade.

—Who'd have thought this of you? said I to myself, in a stew.—What in the name of fortune shall I do?—and my heart seemed to go down to my very toes as I followed behind him, and yet, with all my vexation, I could scarcely keep from laughing. Determined, however, to make an effort for the girl's sake, I said—

"Sir! sir!" trying to interpose myself, "You'll—ahem.—sir, you'll find the key of that closet in your study, sir, wont you?"

"No, sir, I shall not," replied he, turning upon me at once the full light of his candle and his countenance, the latter of which was unmoved as ever.

In another instant he pulled open the door, and stooping down with the light—there was my lady, couched in the farther corner.

"I thought as much!—I thought as much!" exclaimed the old gentleman, in his usual dry, stiff manner—"rise, madam!" continued he, motioning to her to depart. "Rise, madam!"

A burst of tears was the first signal of her getting under weigh—of course,—but finding her uncle continued unmoved, she slowly gathered herself up, and while we followed in her rear, her uncle lighted her to the door.

The last twinkle of her petticoat had departed, the door was duly closed by Mr. Solid, and setting down his candle on the counter, he turned his eye—methodical as ever—upon me.

"Mr. Wortley!—this is not right!—Mr. Wortley, this will not do!—I am afraid, sir, we must part—you did not come here, sir, for this purpose!"

"I am very sorry, sir,—very sorry," was all that I could at first get out in reply to these solemn reproaches.—"I am aware, sir, that it is all my fault, but if you will confine your reproaches to me, and overlook the matter on the part of your niece, I am ready to give you my word of honour that it shall not occur again."

"Sir, I will promise nothing of the sort—though I may consider what you have stated. In the mean time, Mr. Wortley, I wish you to understand, that I am by no means pleased with you—no, sir, I am not.—I have to request that you will send those medicines off by the lad now waiting in the kitchen, and that as soon as they are ready."

The old gentleman applied his hand to the lock, went out, ordered his niece to her bed, and then departed to his own.

"A very pretty mode of learning physic," said I, thinking I was alone.

"Ay, your worship, and a very pleasant one," said Jeremy, entering.

"And you, you rascal, what do you know about the matter?"

"All that the lady could—no—forbid I should say all that the lady *could*—but all that the lady *would* tell me on the subject."

"No more of this," said I, in somewhat of an ill-temper, desiring him to help me with the medicines. As soon as these were ready, I looked about for the heart-shaped blister, but nothing like it could I see any where, although I hunted every corner of the surgery.

"That mischievous little minx must have hidden it away," said I; "how provoking!" However, as I could

not send for it, we spread another, despatched it to the patient, and went off to bed; for our two honest fellow pupils having parents in the town, boarded out.

The next morning was Sunday, and I of course expected to hear something more of the niece-case, but to look at Mr. Solid's face one might have been in utter ignorance as to whether he had a niece at all.

Away he went as usual to see his patients and I to inquire for my blister. As for the latter the lady positively denied all knowledge of having even seen it.

Where can I have put it, thought I,—this is just like one of my tricks;—once more the surgery was ransacked from top to bottom, but the search proving vain, Jeremy and myself set off to a church which stood at a little distance.

Now it was the custom of worthy Mr. Solid every Sabbath morning to come to church, as soon as his patients had been visited, leaving the medicine to be compounded after service. From this rule, except in cases of necessity, he never departed. On this day, however, I knew he had a great many people to see, and therefore did not expect that he would make his appearance at all.

Ten minutes after the sermon had been begun, however, in he popped. He had a small pew containing one seat close to the door, which thus permitted him to slip in or out without much notice. Jeremy and myself were posted in another part of the church, where we could well observe our worthy instructor in pharmacy, and scarcely had he glided into his little pew when my man of honesty whispered me, "Only look at Mr. Solid, your worship, if he hasn't come to church in his surgery jacket." At these words I gave a most scrutinizing glance, and surely enough there was our medical preceptor in his blue cloth jacket. This, thought I, is the result of one of his fits of absence. He must have put it on to make up some medicines since we left the house, and forgotten to change his dress—depend on it he no more knows that he has a jacket on his back, than I imagine I am among the wilds of Siberia.

However, in a few minutes the service was over. Out slipped Mr. Solid, and anxious not to keep him waiting for us, we hurried after him. As he was hastening away, however, he met one of his best patients, by whom he was detained to answer some trivial question.

On our arriving at the church porch, his face was turned towards us, and we observed him talking as gravely as

usual; but somehow or other the people as they passed stopped to look at him. The ladies turned away their heads—the gentlemen began to smile—the smile progressed into a titter, and by the time Mr. Solid made his parting bow to the lady, the titter had become an irrepressible laugh.

Mr. Solid, not a little angry at this piece of rudeness, faced about—when oh! monstrous sight! oh! still worse! Neglectful god Apollo! that could thus forget the dignity of one of thy votaries; there—there did we behold—on that unhappy but conspicuous station where the very soul and seat of honour is supposed to be—nothing less than my identical lost blister.

There it was!—a great, staring, heart-shaped piece of white leather—“And to be the shape of a *heart* too! and in such a situation!” exclaimed Jeremy, “oh me!”

Of all things most ludicrous upon earth, this was the worst. In an instant the whole truth flashed upon me! I now, for the first time, remembered, that on the entrance of the worthy man's niece, I had carelessly flung the blister down into the arm-chair, and being of the same colour as the oaken seat, it had never of course been perceived by worthy Mr. Solid, who doubtless carefully extending his coat tails, for fear they should get creased, had thus unconsciously ornamented himself in a manner he little suspected.

On rising, the coat tails resuming their place, of course concealed this distinctive badge from view, and—absent as he was,—it might have remained there for months but for his forgetting to take off his jacket before coming to church.

As these things rushed through my mind, I gave way, despite of all my efforts, to the most immoderate fit of laughter.

“What do you mean, sir? What do you mean?” demanded poor Solid from one of the convulsed by-standers, as furiously as was in his nature.

The man, unable to speak from excess of mirth, could only point; when the worthy apothecary looked first at himself, and then at the laughing crowd, and, unable to comprehend the matter, turned round and round in utter bewilderment.

Unfortunately, however, every time he turned, this abominable white heart came in view with a whirligig motion, and for every rotation a fresh burst of laughter was

elicited, at an object which evidently had wandered so very far from its right station.

However, some ragged urchins, who always seem at hand to exult in the distresses of a good Samaritan, now began to hoot in a most unequivocal manner, while Solid, for the first time, seeming to apprehend that he had come out in his jacket, involuntarily felt for his tails.

Consternation quickly gathered on his face, as he ascertained these to be wanting, and farther, that his fingers had alighted on some foreign substance! Quickly wandering over his new decoration, they seemed instinctively to ascertain its nature, and spreading themselves out to hide his unblushing honours, he darted off through the crowd at the very top of his speed; followed by the shouts and laughter of every ragamuffin within hail!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Which displays Dr. Plausible's notion of a "difficult case."

As soon as my laughter was sufficiently moderated to permit my showing myself before poor Solid, Jeremy and myself directed our steps homeward. On the road, however, it was agreed that we had better pretend a perfect ignorance as to the scene which we had just witnessed, and wait any communication on the subject, should such be made, from the sufferer himself.

Faith, I had not long to wait. On entering the surgery there were assembled the whole bevy. Never before had I seen so much of anger concentrated in the countenance of Mr. Solid, who had now changed his dress, and certainly never had I dreamed that the faces of his apprentices could by any means be brought to wear such a look of virtuous indignation.

Every eye was fixed on me.

"Mr. Wortley, you will step this way," said Solid, with that determined alacrity ever distinguishing the wrath of a systematic disposition.

"Certainly," replied I, following my unhappy predecessor into the little parlour, and closing the door.

"After the unwarrantable insult which you have this day allowed to be put on me," said the apothecary, without taking time to be seated, "I have only to tell you, that the sooner you relieve my household of your presence the more I shall be pleased."

"Trick!—what do you mean, sir?" said I, taken utterly aback.

"What should I mean, Mr. Wortley, but the blister?"

"It was purely the result of accident, Mr. Solid."

"Excuse me, sir; I have been better informed."

"May I ask, Mr. Solid, for your authority?"

"No, sir! it convinces me, and that is sufficient—besides, sir, I saw you and your servant laughing in the church porch most immoderately—most indecorously—I may say, most profanely!"

"And is this, sir, your only evidence?"

"No, Mr. Wortley, I have other testimony!"

In an instant it occurred to me that his pupils, anxious to be rid of my surveillance, had thus poisoned his mind against me.—Shall I undeceive him? thought I—no, it is not worth my while.—Turning upon my heel, without another word, I left the house to return to it no more.

"Jeremy," said I, as soon as we had gained the street—for I had made a sign to him to follow me—"it has become necessary that I should change my instructor—get away from Mr. Solid's every thing that belongs to us, and come with our baggage to me at the Royal Hotel."

Jeremy touched his hat and departed, while I sauntered forward, stopping every now and then to think of this new and curious turn in my fortune, and as often bursting into a loud laugh at the most ludicrous event that had caused it.

As to grieving over this change in my destiny, that was the last thing of which I thought. I had been too deeply and severely wounded to pay attention to a trivial hurt, and feeling rather the temporary exhilaration of spirits consequent on change, I walked forward, and having ordered dinner, commenced inquiries into the several characters of the various medical men with whom the city abounded.

My choice being soon made as to my future medical mentor, I received Jeremy's report of a peaceful evacuation of our late quarters, strolled out, took a walk, came

home, and on the next morning repaired to the residence of Mr. Plausible, or as he called himself Dr. Plausible, though as to his right to bear the latter title, I must say, that long as I was acquainted with him, that was a subject at the truth of which I could never arrive.

Having called early, I found the Doctor at home. He was a still longer being than Solid, and much more lank; he had a profusion of what is called small talk, of which he was very generous, and a kind of manner that would not be resisted.

We quickly settled terms between us, and having been shown to my room, I left to Jeremy the task of getting my traps into it, and then descended to witness Plausible's practice, for he had a great number of inferior and gratis patients, who came to him before noon. As my friend the Doctor had taken care to ask a price three times more in amount than that I had paid Solid, so also he affected to treat me as a person of infinitely more consequence than I had been with the latter.

At the end of every phrase, he took care to stick in "Sir," talked very unnecessarily of the "accommodation required by *your servant*," &c., &c., and every now and then demanded my opinion on medical subjects, when he must too well have known my utter incapacity to answer him, with other similar evidences of a wish to court me. Few men have naturally a disinclination to flattery; I only, therefore, looked upon him as having a little of the knave in his composition, and if, thought I, he has only designs upon my money, he is heartily welcome to all he can get.

That this courtesy to me was something more than his ordinary wont, I could very plainly perceive from his conduct to the four apprentices who bustled about at his command, occupied in the various duties of the moment. One I remember was very busy preparing an ingredient, for the excellency of which I was to take the word of its proprietor. This I was very ready to do, or indeed anything else, thought I, provided it is not the physic itself.

This preparation, on which I soon found that my new master greatly prided himself—was the "rheumatic elixir, or oil of bricks:" being, in short, nothing more than olive oil poured over bricks previously brought to a red heat, and given internally, as Dr. Plausible expressed himself, "with great effect, in doses of from sixty to two hundred drops in any mucilaginous medium."

Then, again, another was composing, he said, his celebrated "*pulvis mirabilis*." "And faith, sir," added he, in a strong Irish accent which every now and then betrayed itself; "faith, I know of few diseases that are not to be overcome by it." Egad, thought I, by all appearance it is enough to overcome any body. The component parts of the *pulvis mirabilis* consisted, I afterwards found out, of common flour, Epsom salts, and red bole ammoniac—simple ingredients for working such wonders.

But I quickly discovered myself to be with one of those geniuses who effect great ends by very little means, for a prescription coming in, to be made up for Dr. Bubblerius, who was his great friend and patron, he contrived, out of four component parts, to compound a recipe that ordered seven.

While my friend was giving to his assistant a few *sotto voce* directions, as to this nice and delicate proceeding, an unhappy woman rushed into the surgery, tearing her hair, and uttering loud cries of —

"Och! my master! och! my poor dear master!"

Dr. Plausible paused in a full-blown description of the greatness of Dr. Bubblerius in the medical world, and the still greater friendship of that great man for him, and with something not unlike a curse, demanded of this new comer what was the matter?

"Is't the matter you ask, doctor? and you a countryman of mine? Och, hone! och, hone!—wasn't it your honour's self gave me a powder? and wasn't it your honour who asked whether it was the black jaunders, or the yellow jaunders, my poor dear master had?—and didn't I tell you 'twas the black jaunders?—and then wasn't it yourself who gave me your *pulvis* my babbyless, and tould me to give him first one dose, and then in the case that he shouldn't be better, you understand, to give him the second dose?"

"Well, well, my good woman, I know all this; and what then?—Did you give him, as I directed, the first powder?"

"In truth did I."

"Well, well, don't cry, my good woman—so you gave him the first dose, and what then?"

"Why, then, sir, he grew much worse."

"Ah!—did he? Well, then, I hope you gave him the second dose?"

"Just so, your honour."

"That was right!—and what after that?"

"Oh, sir, after that," sobbing more piteously than ever, "after that the poor ould soul just died."

"Humph!" said Plausible, somewhat disconcerted. Turning round, he muttered—"devilish inconsiderate of him." Then addressing himself once more to the woman—"Hem!—so your master died! Well, well, be comforted—he won't be troubled any more now, you know, Judy!"

"May be not, sir!—but 'tis rather hard, too, after taking all your physic with such a deal of fortification!"

"Tut! tut! These things will happen sometimes. Did he die *directly* after he'd taken the powder, or how?"

"No, no, sir; he was taken again with that terrible sickness worse than ever."

"Ah! come, come, be consoled, Judy, and here's sixpence to drink repose to his soul—'Tisn't so bad as you made it out, after all; for whether or no, you know, Judy, 'twas better to have that over before he went, Judy;" and putting the coin into her hand, and laying his hands gently on her shoulder, he ejected the complainant from the surgery, and having securely bolted the door, turned round to me with—"a difficult case, that, Mr. Wortley!—and now let us take some breakfast."

On repairing to the breakfast-table, we there found the doctor's wife, an agreeable woman; but as she neither had any daughters, nor yet any hand in teaching me physic, this is all I intend to say about her.

Scarcely were we seated, when a ring came at the surgery bell, and within a few seconds the head of an apprentice was popped in to say, "sir, Mrs. Brown's in the surgery."

"What, Mrs. Brown, of L— Park?" demanded Plausible, getting up in such a hurry as almost to drag the whole tea-set from the table, by the cloth which was tucked under his chin.

"No, no, sir; not that Mrs. Brown!" quickly replied the assistant, "but old mother Brown, the pauper patient."

"Oh!" rejoined Plausible, with that lengthened drawl of interjection which saying so little can still express so much,—“I wish, Mr. Tomkins,” added he, in his most severe manner, as he wiped the fingers which his haste

had buttered, "I wish, Mr. Tomkins, you would announce people by their proper titles!"

Mr. Tomkins retired, duly impressed, of course; and turning to me, with one of his very blindest smiles, Plausible assured me that the spare seat in his carriage was much at my service, or a horse, if I preferred that mode of going his country round with him. He then began to question me on all I saw at Solid's, and asked my reason for quitting; on hearing the truth, he indulged his mirth, and confessed that he had heard of the affair within ten minutes after its occurrence. He thence went on to pick to pieces his "friend's" character, personal and professional, with a degree of rancour to understand which it is necessary to mix in medical society, in which the scalping knife is never so ready as to lay bare the back of a brother professor.

Though I might safely have indulged in a little dissection of the absent, I still maintained him to be a man of unimpeachable principle, and a good surgeon and apothecary.

"True," said Plausible, "but—that's all!—for in the ways of the world he is a mere child. He can't mix in every day society—he does not even know how to tell an ordinary lie with a good grace. No, no, sir," shaking his head, "had he the wisdom of Solomon in possession, with the age of Methuselah in reversion, he'd never get on in physic.

"In the medical profession we are doomed too often to meet with a great deal of ingratitude both from the higher and the lower classes. But the older a man grows, the more surely he will find out that there are only two great and sure rules by which to succeed in practice. Only be sure and give your patients lots of physic—no matter what; and let them eat and drink—no matter how. If your patients die, 'tis a pleasant way of getting over an anxious piece of business, if your patients live, why, that's more pleasant still. As for Solid, I said from the first he'd never get on. There was one point at starting which he totally forgot—while apothecaries are paid by their medicines, no apothecary can hope to succeed who keeps a conscience—a moderate-minded man is content to keep his carriage."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Which contains the case and treatment—saying nothing of the cure—of old Mother Brown; and which the autobiographer recommends to the attention of the public in general, and the medical profession in particular.

"WELL, my good woman, what's the matter with you?" said Plausible to Mother Brown, in his own pompous way.

"Why, bless ye, sir! don't you know me? I'm most killed with the rheumatiz."

"I only wish you were," muttered Plausible over his shoulder to me, then aloud; "Oh, ho? the rheumatism, eh, dame? Where do you feel the most pain?"

"Oh bless ye, sir, all about the back and loins!"

"Ah, indeed! and I suppose you feel it still more when you get warm in bed?"

"Ay, sir, sure enough!—'tis terrible—nothing's like it then."

"So I suppose—ay,—well, well,—you've come to the right person at last; I've a sovereign remedy for you. Now you see, Mr. Wortley," continued Plausible, turning round and taking me on one side, "this is a case I have long wanted to get a sample of in our pauper practice. I'll tell you why, sir,—my eminent friend, Dr. Bubblerius—you've heard me mention Dr. Bubblerius before?"

"Oh, yes!" said I, for in truth he had hardly mentioned any one else.

"Well, sir, my friend—to whom, by the by, I'll take an early opportunity of introducing you; well, sir, he informed me—I'm sure, sir, he'll show you a great deal of kindness,—he informed me that there is an instant, and as my eminent friend assured me, an almost magical cure for this tormenting disease, found out by the French, and termed accupuncturation. This mode of treatment, I must tell you, sir, consists simply of wounding the part affected with a long needle. Nothing, says my eminent friend, can be more simple,"—except himself, thought I,—but this was as well left unexpressed. "You see, Mr. Wortley," continued Plausible—"you introduce the needle, which should be made on purpose, some three

or four inches deep, more or less, into those fleshy parts which form the seat of pain, and then again withdraw it—a treatment which, I may say, is simplicity itself, you perceive!”

“But how can that cure rheumatism, sir?”

“Why!” replied Plausible, hesitating, and not a little puzzled, though at the same time endeavouring to look as wise as might be—“there are several different reasonings my eminent friend assures me on this head. Some ascribe it to counter-irritation—some to one thing, some to another—my eminent friend sets it down to animal electricity, one part of the body being plus and another minus, and that the needle acting as a conducting medium, re-establishes an equal balance.”

“And a very ingenious theory, indeed, sir,” said I; “and pray, sir, what say you?”

“Why, sir, I say nothing; for between ourselves,” lowering his voice to a confidential whisper, “I know nothing about it; but still, you perceive Mr. Wortley, it’s the duty of every conscientious medical man, to try every new remedy he can hear of.”

“Oh! certainly!” said I, “and d—l take his patients”—this was *sotto voce*.

“Now, sir,” resumed Plausible, “my eminent friend is very anxious to establish this mode of practice, this accupuncturation, and as he always calls me in to perform his minor operations, I of course am also desirous to try the effect of it, since you perceive, sir, it would not be amiss to acquire that degree of skill which may be necessary. There cannot be a finer case, you perceive, than old Mother Brown’s!”

“True, sir,” said I, “where shall I find the necessary instruments?” for the rest of the pupils had been sent to breakfast.

“Oh! as to the instruments for this operation, Mr. Wortley, they are as I have said so very simple, I have not yet got down from town, some that I ordered on purpose. But I can easily repair that omission. Do you stay here for a few minutes, and be sure you don’t let old Mother Brown get away before I come back.”

Thus left to myself I looked at the poor aged damsel, and repeated to myself a passage from a late poem of my old enemy, Pope:—

“The lamb thy slaughter deems to bleed to-day,
Had it thy reason, would it skip and play!”

Poor decrepit soul, little dreamed she of the plot hatching against her peace; and as I witnessed her suffering I had half a mind to unbolt the surgery door and give her a hint to depart, but I could not do this without a breach of confidence, and even then she would be coming back again or else raising the town against him, and if *she* does not prove the initiatory sufferer, thought I, some one else will, and perhaps, it may not hurt her after all, and whether or not this is the ram caught in the thicket, so she must take her chance. As I came to this conclusion in stepped Plausible.

"This will do her business, sir," said he, showing me his instrument. "You see, sir," he went on to explain with much self-gratulation at his own ingenuity. "I've made one of Mrs. Plausible's darning needles answer all the purpose of the finest accupuncturator, merely, sir, by fixing it in a handle!" pointing to the rude piece of wood which he had fashioned and stuck on.

"Admirable contrivance, sir," said I, scarcely able to refrain from laughing in his face. With much importance and many fine words he now approached his patient, having cunningly slid into his pocket the instrument of torture, just as a tipstaff conceals his baton in approaching the wretch he is about to deprive of liberty.

With many a beguiling word did Plausible, who, as I have hinted, was not at all wanting in this respect, now proceed to the attainment of the end in view. Having placed the patient in a proper position and laid bare the seat of pain, the newly adapted needle was produced from the operator's pocket, and the point made to perforate the skin as gently as possible; piercing through one of those substantial muscles in the lumbar region, denominated the *glutæi maximi*. As this manœuvre was carried into effect by a quick rotatory motion betwixt the finger and thumb, it did not give much pain, except in the first instance. This was soon past, and the patient, ignorant of what was going on, certainly bore the operation very well.

Having carried the puncture on the right side, about two inches deep, Plausible withdrew the steel, and triumphantly demanded of the patient if she did not feel herself much better?"

"Well, sir, I don't know but that I may be!" responded Mother Brown, with a groan that greatly strengthened the doubtful import of her words.

"Ay, ay, we must try the other side, I see, Mr. Wortley," said Plausible. "My eminent friend says, that unless both sides of the spinal column are equalized, it is not giving the experiment fair play"—and accordingly away went the needle into the other side of old Mother Brown.

Whether this was fair play or not, we shall see in the sequel. Imboldened by his first success, and perhaps not altogether satisfied with its result, he now introduced the instrument until the rude handle forbade its farther progress.

"There, Mr. Wortley, you see that a little skill does the thing most effectually, and is soon acquired!"

Scarcely had the words left his lips, when I heard something snap, and my astonishment may be imagined when I discovered that in turning round to address me, the motion of Plausible's body had broken the darning needle short off in that of Mother Brown.

What price was it not worth to have seen the doctor's face at that moment?—All that is imaginable of blankness and dismay were written there, together with a sort of doubt as to the reality of the scene. On my part, as usual, the catastrophe struck me as so inexpressibly ludicrous, that my utmost efforts were necessary to keep my risible propensities in subjection. Plausible perceived my sides shaking, and this restored him to himself.

A slight smile stole over even his own distressed countenance, and putting up his finger to his mouth as a sign of silence, he whipped the useless handle into his pocket,—started to his feet, and suddenly rubbing his hands to signify that the operation was finished, he exclaimed, "There, my good woman, don't you feel yourself a great deal better after that?"

The impudence of the fellow!—and this after sticking into an old woman of sixty, four inches of darning needle for the rest of her life!

Now then for the scene, thought I—and having had little hand in bringing it about, I determined to have less in bearing it; so quickly opening the door that led into the house, I slipped out, and left the skilful Dr. Plausible to endure the brunt alone.

After listening at no great distance for a quarter of an hour, without being able to distinguish any part of that hurricane of sobs and cries which I thought so sure to en-

sue, I ventured back once more to the field of battle. There stood the victor solus, quietly turning over the leaves of his daybook, and adding up the sum total of the amount which he had put down to the account of his patients on the preceding day.

"Why where is old Mother Brown, sir?" said I, not venturing more than my head through the door, and fully expecting to see her injured shade pop out from some jar or bottle.

"Ha, ha!" said Plausible, looking up and laughing—"Is that you, Mr. Wortley?—you may come in with all ^{sway} y!"

"May I, sir?—I am glad to hear it!—but how in the name of fortune did you manage to get out the piece of needle?"

"Get it out!" repeated Plausible, in surprise that almost amounted to indignation,—“of course, Mr. Wortley, I never got it out, nor ever thought of trying!”

"But, bless me, Dr. Plausible, what will old Mother Brown do?"

"Oh, she'll do as she did before, perhaps, a little better; but at her age, you know, she can't do much worse."

"Yes, but won't she feel the needle pricking her?"

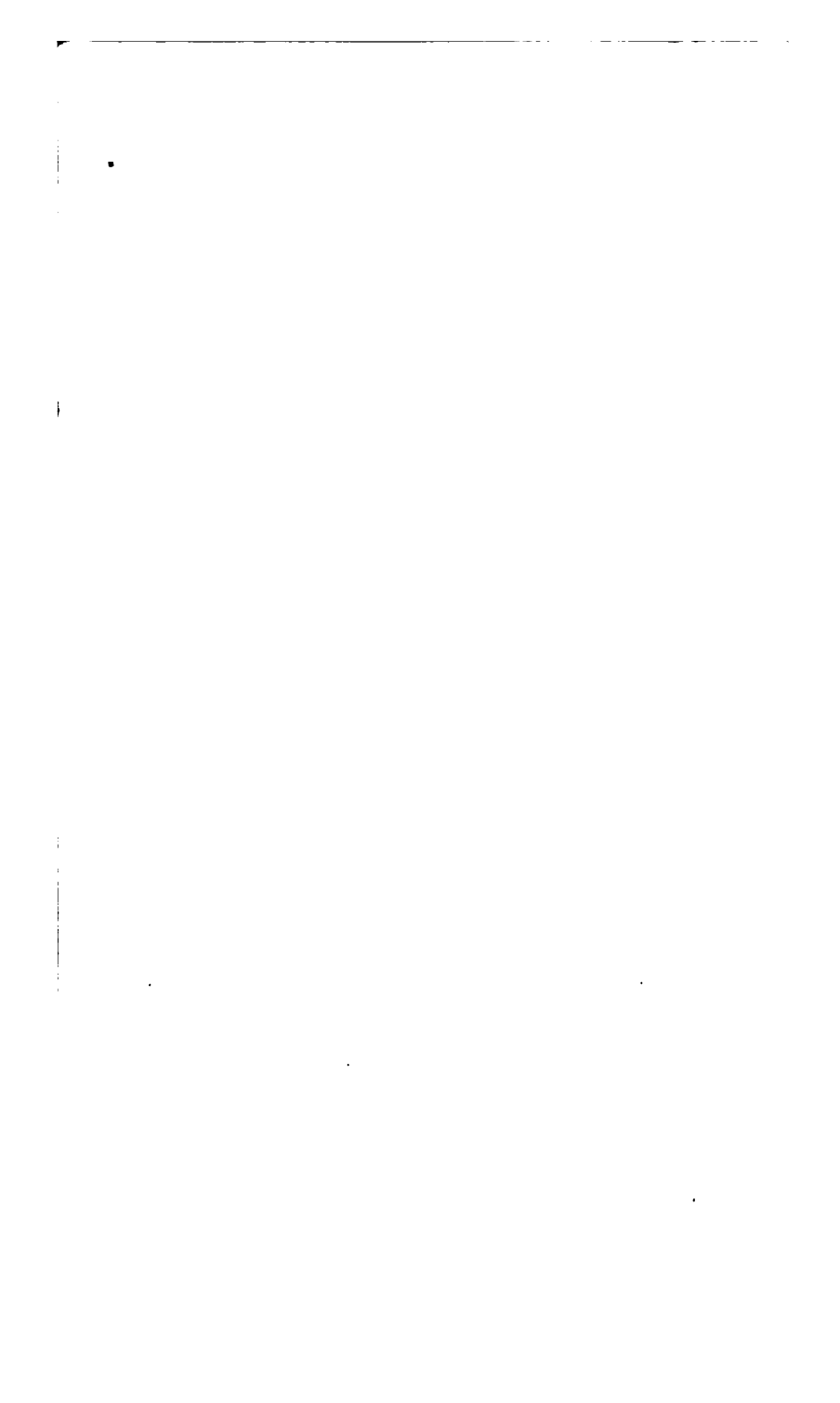
"Suppose she does; she'll only take it for a twinge of rheumatism—a little sharper than ordinary, perhaps."

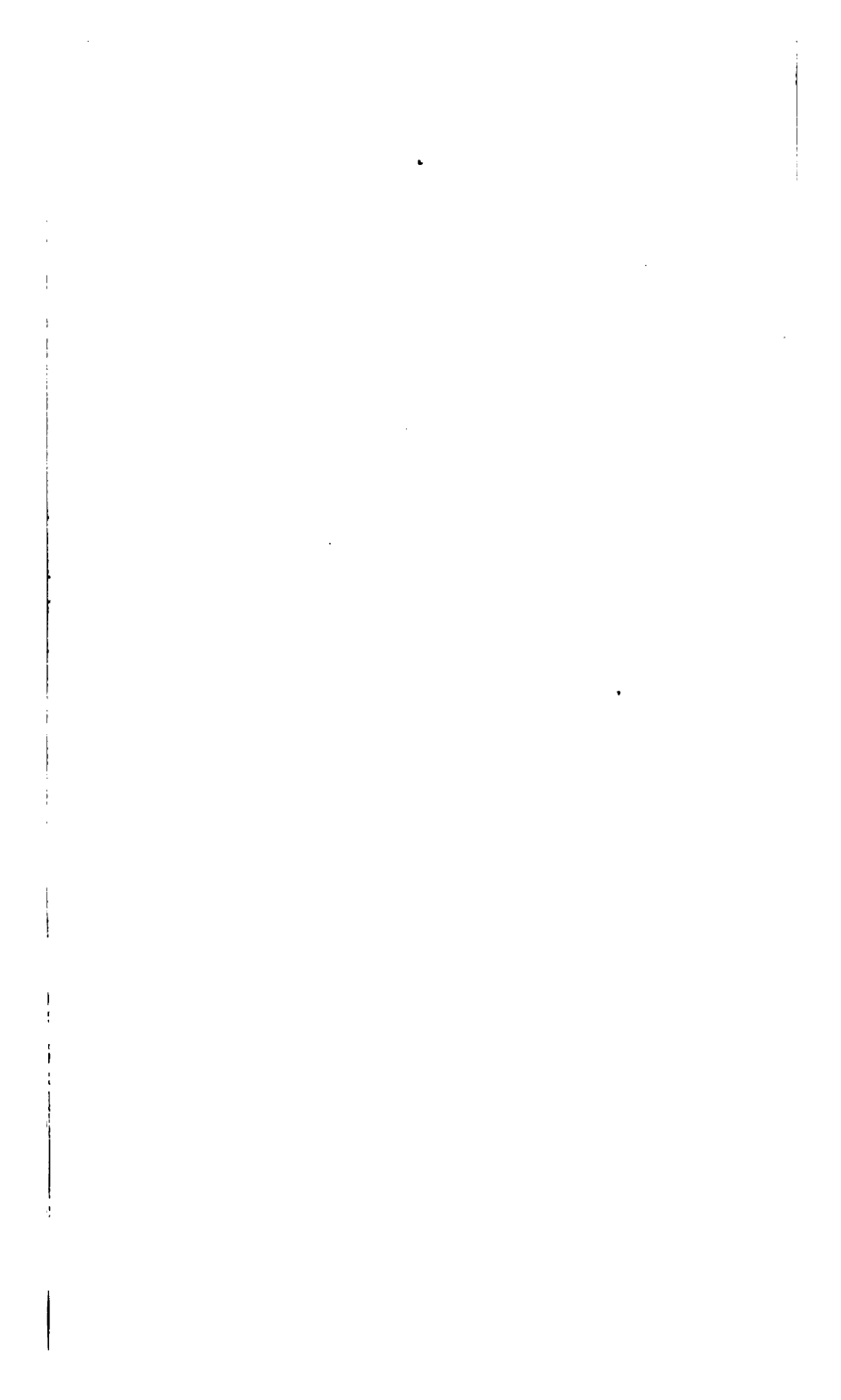
"And won't it cause any swelling of the parts?"

"Oh no!—possibly it may, but most probably not;—such things have often occurred before."

"And what then will become of the needle?"

"Oh! the needle, you know, will keep jogging on; and if the old soul lives long enough, may yet by some chance or other work its way out. Such a case, however, you perceive, Mr. Wortley, is not without its benefit, for it teaches us that the instrument for this operation should be made of soft steel, to bend without breaking. But come, sir, get on, if you please, your hat and gloves, and you shall go my country round with me; for I meet the great Dr. Bubblerius to-day, in consultation over the case of my dear friend, Lady Hottentot."





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